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EDITORIAL

PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

During New York's newspaper strike, which began on August 9, Bloomingdale's and other metropolitan emporiums reported that business was healthy. The advertising for television sets and electric socks has found different paths to the consumer's door, making newspaper ads now look sadly unimaginative and wasteful. Marshall McLuhan implied as much years ago—you shouldn't rely on hot, linear print in these days of cool media. But what of that other even more outmoded linear medium, the hardbound book? Has it found ways to thrive in the absence of the single sieve through which nearly all book information is poured, *The New York Times Book Review*? The answer to that question depends very much upon what you mean by *book*.

Many book executives who would, but for some twist of fate, be marketing TV sets, were able mid-strike to do something much like that. The big books, known in the trade by the revealing term "blockbusters," whereby they shed the stigma of mere bookishness and enter the world of action, have done well. These items, marketed in much the same way as Cuisinarts and scuba diving equipment, do not depend upon reviews or ads in the *Times* for their success. This is as true for the "decent" blockbuster such as Theodore White's *In Search of History* as for Mario Puzo's *Fools Die* (see page 508) which will find its way into flight bags and shopping carts, *TBR* or not. But a book like Puzo's, it should be pointed out, is not in the eyes of the trade really a book at all. It is first a movie, second a mass-market paperback, and only out of habit, and possibly nostalgia, a hardback novel or nonfiction.

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SPECIAL BOOK ISSUE

COVERT SCHOLARSHIP

THE MARKET FOR POTTED EXPERTISE

ALLEN BOYCE

A great deal can be said for the contract and grant system whereby agencies of the federal government draw upon the knowledge and skills of private groups, scholars and specialists. But all too often mischievous consequences flow from symbiotic relationships that develop between contractors, grantees and the government. This danger has become acute since 1955, when Operations and Policy Research Incorporated (OPR) entered the picture.

The original stated aim of OPR was "to conduct and encourage basic and applied research, participate in educational activities, and advise on matters relevant to all phases of government and private policy formation and operation." What this meant was put more specifically when OPR, applying for tax-exemption as a nonprofit group, notified the Treasury Department that its purpose was "support of and actual conduct of research and educational programs in the social sciences and humanities; participation in government research projects." (During OPR's first few years it was denied tax-exemption status on the ground that it was engaged in commercial pursuits, but in 1959 the IRS decided it qualified for exemption as an educational/charitable group.)

OPR's stated aims concealed much more than they revealed. Instead of leaving it to the government to enlist the services of academicians in an aboveboard fashion, it provided the bureaucracy with an essentially covert mechanism whereby it could secure the fruits of tailored research and camouflaged publishing ventures by

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LETTERS.

PVT. PODHORETZ

Jamaica, N.Y.

Philip Green's "The 'I'm All Right' Jacobites" [*The Nation*, Oct. 14] stirred up some recollections about one of the movement's leading figures and caused me to wonder, and reminisce.

Once a week during basic training at Fort Dix, the company commanders used to march their troops to an auditorium for a one-hour lecture delivered by a chaplain of one of the Great Faiths. . . . At Moral Lecture the various chaplains could be counted upon respectively to: (*1*) Remind the boys of the ethics learned at their mothers' knees and to respect womanhood (Jewish); (*2*) write home often and apply for dependency deductions for the home folks where necessary (Interdenominational Protestant); (*3*) tremble with pride at being an active part of the Crusade against Godless Communism (Roman Catholic).

Now what self-respecting quasi-Socialist would put up with such crap for eight to sixteen weeks, if he could worm out of it? So I respectfully appeared before the C.O. one day and explained that, as a Huguenot, I would be violating major tenets of the faith by hearkening unto the sermons of the noncommunicant or infidel priests. . . . The God that abandoned us at La Rochelle came across at Fort Dix, and the C.O. acceded to my pleas.

My small victory won the admiration of a barracks mate who introduced himself as Pvt. Norman Podhoretz. . . . In the short course of our acquaintance at King Co. 364 Inf. Reg. Bn., I learned of his work at the *Partisan Review*, his political leanings, and his somewhat overriding anxieties at being in a Know-Nothing army in the era of McCarthy (1953-55). The place of origin of his parents, his ethnic background, some of the youth organizations he'd belonged to, even his literary associations he felt were not the kinds of credentials to . . . place him in a happy position for his two-year stint.

Imagine my surprise barely six months later to come across him again at Fort Devens, Mass., where I was stationed, and at the moment tracking down a fraternity brother recently shipped into the base. This frat chum, a renegade, madcap, irreverent, radical scapegrace throughout college years, ultimately emerged from the army an Ultramontane Catholic. For his stint, he had been assigned to the Army Security Agency, a super hush-hush outfit, and hardly the kind of outfit to be taking in the likes of him. Our friendship has continued, but I have yet to pry one word of information. . .about what one did in the ASA, or what it was all about. Except, that it seemed to be his personal Emmaus to high conservatism. . .

But we've left Pvt. Podhoretz standing, or rather, marching smartly and silently into the dark of a spring night, flashlight in hand, with a regiment of fellow troopers, all with flashlights in hand, all marching silently in block-long and rather spectral rows along the byways of Fort Devens. When I spotted him, I called out, "Hey, Podhoretz, what are you doing here?" and got a finger-to-lips, mum's-the-word sign. At another time, I saw him again and asked about his travails and joys since basic training. What was he in now? "ASA," he replied, and that finished that. Since then, of course, I have come in contact with him solely through his always fascinating publications, and have witnessed with dismay his continuing march toward the Right. I wonder how he would feel now about Huguenots tugging at the routines set by Authority.

And I wonder about that ASA. Has it been a processing plant of some sort, taking wickedly sputtering old lamps and stamping them into new dry-cell-operated flashlights to light the way to a callous elitism? . . . *Albert F. Bauer*

GOING 13 ONE BETTER

New York City

The editorial, "Is There a Parade?" [*The Nation*, Oct. 14], helps establish the fact that there is no such parade of "New Conservatism" as we are urged to believe. And you quote Philip Green's statement that "the New Conservatives can be prevented from implementing their travesty of a social philosophy only if the Left finds better ways to meet those fears and needs."

Why leave it entirely to the Left? The October issue of *Scientific American* contains an article by two highly regarded scientists which shows clearly, with diagrams, facts and figures, that the United States can cut 40% from the defense budget with no loss in defense capability. The New Conservatives are pushing for the massive tax cut embodied in Proposition 13. We don't have to be very far to the Left to meet them rather more than half way—by also demanding a large tax cut, but specifying that it can come from a 40% reduction in defense expenditures. This amounts to about $50 billion—a saving to impress even the nuttiest of the Proposition 13 crowd. And the saving would be, according to the scientists, at *no loss of defense capability*. *Theodore Wilson*

THE MORAL CALCULUS

New York City

Prof. Jean Bethke Elshtain ["The 'Born Again' Smorgasbord," *The Nation*, Oct. 21] sweepingly condemns the whole range of today's unorthodox religiosity by referring to its more vulgar and simplistic manifestations. . . . It is as if one were to condemn the New Left by referring to the Symbionese excess. I question whether some casual encounter with Jesus freaks and a perusal of *New Directions* qualifies the author to make such a sweeping typification of a complex phenomenon. I also suggest that there are devotees of today's "spiritual masters" and nouveau therapies who have a more sophisticated moral calculus than the mindless irrationalism which Elshtain attributes to one and all. . . .

Professor Elshtain prefers a faith which reflects a "settled community" and a traditional way of life. But *there is no settled community*. The explosion of "new religions" reflects rapid sociocultural change which is undermining homogeneous neighborhoods and extended family networks and other manifestations of settled communities and traditions. Evangelical frenzy as well as Roszak's mystical personalism (which was also prominent in the New Left) is a response to this flux. It is a response deserving more sympathy than is accorded to it by Professor Elshtain. *Thomas Robbins*

Amherst, Mass.

I agree with Mr. Robbins that "evangelical frenzy" and "mystic personalism" are responses to our contemporary malaise, including the breakdown of traditional social forms and the draining of our civic institutions of their normative significance. While I am in sympathy with the inner tumult and distress that prompt the responses my article attempts to understand as well as to criticize, I must withhold sympathy from the social and political manifestations engendered by both frenzy and personalism. If there are those among today's "spiritual masters" and "nouveau therapies" who have a "more sophisticated moral calculus" than those I explored I have found no evidence of it, either in the literature of these movements or enthusiasms or in the public exemplifications of this potpourri of "private virtues." *Jean Bethke Elshtain*

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EDITORIALS.

(Continued from Front Cover)

Book publishers have always known how to sell blockbusters. What the strike has made clear to anyone still in doubt is that this generation of publishers, with some noble exceptions, has never known what to do with quality books. Failing any vigorous or sensible solution to selling good books without the *Times*, the publishers simply postponed the publication of some titles. As for the rest, the strike has enabled publishers to do nothing whatever for them and still have an alibi for poor sales. Under ordinary circumstances if a quality book gets a good review in the *Times*, its publisher may possibly do a little something to promote it—an ad in the daily or Sunday *Times*. During the strike some of this money went to outlying papers with book pages. In fact, *The Washington Post* seems to have received just enough extra advertising to squeeze its review space, but not enough to pay for expanded coverage of books.

Without any help from publishers, some people of good faith have done their part. A few magazines and newspapers expanded or introduced book reviews, and even television made a bemused attempt to cover books. But all of this can amount to little more than what one reviewer calls "duty twitching." Electronic journalists and many magazine people do not really consider serious books a part of the culture—even a sale of 50,000 copies for an especially successful quality book will not impress a media person used to dealing in the high seven figures. Publishers have done their part to encourage this view of serious books by, among other things, overpublicizing their big money deals to the exclusion of other book news. The serious writer was beached on the higher cultural level; all he could do was wait for the strike to be over, hope for a decent review in the *Times* and the chance of some paltry promotional money.

Even if you allow for an outright distaste for quality among most publishing executives, it is still difficult to understand why they have been content to lose money on what one publisher calls "secondary" books, and why they did not seize upon the strike to explore new ways of reaching the readers those books require. The last strike gave birth to *The New York Review of*

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Books which now has a large guaranteed readership of academics and intellectuals, but there is still no means of reaching the ordinary serious reader who happens to live in Hanover-Taboso, Ohio, and does not subscribe to *The New York Times*. Even if he has the respectable book page of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* mailed to his home, there is much in the world of books he will never hear about. Then too the majority of college students, the future book buyers of America, will for the most part be unable to name one good title from among those published in the last year. Can it be that interested readers are the last untapped market in this country? And is it possible that in a country where Barbara Tuchman's book on the 14th century can sell 135,000 copies during the newspaper strike, it is unprofitable to promote other quality books?

Book chains like Dalton and Waldenbooks, with their computers tuned to spot new fads, may eventually show publishers how to sell books outside the major metropolitan centers, but if they do they will at the same time control what gets published—an unhappy prospect. This and other developments all point to the alienation of reader from publisher. The trade no longer considers consumer advertising important to its profits. Books that make "meaningful" money will do so from subsidiary rights and advertising must be directed there. Thus the simple and direct relationship between author, publisher and reader which used to sell books is attenuated and obscured.

Since some good books with no help from anyone get lucky and make their own way to the reading public, it would seem that those readers the trade doesn't believe in do exist. A Chicano novel by Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me, Ultima*, with no reviews or promotion has sold 85,000 copies. To cite a more celebrated example, Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*, published by Daughters, Inc., sold some 250,000 copies with no promotion. Now of course Brown's second and much inferior novel, *Six of One*, has been elevated to a blockbuster by a major publishing house and you come across Rita Mae hyperbole everywhere. It is not unlike this trade to miss the boat once and then try to get aboard when it isn't there any more.

Publishers generally respond to the foregoing criticisms by crying poor, as if that were both cause and excuse enough for anything. The facts suggest otherwise. *Forbes* reports that the industry is thriving: book prices have outpaced inflation by a margin of 20% from 1972 to 1976, and book publishing "with revenues of 4.3 billion, is approximately 23% larger than network television." Clearly good books do not have to be sacrificed for profits, and most important we need not be what we are becoming, a country of two widely separated cultures, high and low.

The Left book clubs of the 1930s and the current example of Rodale Press with its many titles on composting and the good life show quite definitively that faithful audiences for good books can be developed and the enterprise made profitable. If book publishers had identities independent of their last bestseller they too might have guaranteed audiences. As it is, they all bid on the same books; they all suffer themselves to be controlled by the mass-market paperback industry; they all settle for an astonishing provincialism of attitude and imagination.

Last spring when we asked a number of publishers if they thought they were responsible for the accuracy of their nonfiction books, they denied that responsibility and ran to the First Amendment for cover. (See "On Truth in Publishing," *The Nation*, June 3, 1978) During the absence of the *Times Book Review* we have had a chance to see the truth of the matter: for publishers, disseminating the widest possible range of ideas (the First Amendment justification) will never be the motive that profit is. Since this will continue to be the case whether there is a *Times Book Review* or not, we are making a small gesture on behalf of a healthy literary culture by devoting this issue of *The Nation* to books.

ELIZABETH POCHODA

Fraser's Game

A new and important development on the American political scene, though it may be temporarily overshadowed by speculations on the elections just held, is likely to have a lasting effect on the country. Douglas Fraser, president of the powerful United Auto Workers, has set in motion the arduous task of bestowing a clearer sense of political direction and social cohesion on the various cause-oriented groups and national organizations which comprise the broad "Left of Center."

That is the real meaning of the one-day gathering of leading representatives of 104 national organizations, including twenty major AFL-CIO unions, which Fraser organized on October 17 in Detroit. Attending at his invitation, to mention a few, were such activists as Tom Hayden of California; ecologist Barry Commoner; Cesar Chavez; Martin Ward, general president of the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters; Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP; Joseph Rauh, the liberal lawyer; Bella Abzug; Michael Harrington, the Socialist; Elie Smeal of the National Organization of Women, and Rafe Pomerantz from Friends of the Earth.

That these and a host of other social activists would respond to a call from the UAW was predictable—they are aware that the disarray on the Left is not the least of the advantages of the vocal Right in America. The meeting also gave single-purpose groups an opportunity to find allies, and the chance for a dialogue with significant sections of the labor movement.

The immediate reason for calling this conference was the frustration and disappointment of Fraser and many other liberal labor leaders with the record of President Carter and Congress. Consequently, much of the national press was disappointed when the conference did not turn into a "Dump Carter" movement, or otherwise become purely political.

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There were two reasons why it didn't: first, Fraser knew there was no real consensus on Carter, and that his proposed "coalition of coalitions" could fall apart before it got started, if the UAW resorted to what has been standard procedure at Left-of-Center conferences: bring delegations together on one broad idea and then give them a structured program and a leader. The second reason why Fraser avoided a purely political stance was that he and many other leaders want to keep their options open for 1980.

By insisting that the conference speakers stick to issues, not personalities, Fraser prevented further fragmentation. This didn't prevent the irrepressible Joseph Rauh from "belling the cat" by naming the President as the man most responsible for the failure of the Democrats to meet their campaign promises or carry out the national convention program. Many single-issue groups also used the conference to air their concerns and causes, and while this irritated some old-timers, a "get acquainted" gathering was needed. It demonstrated that liberal gatherings are not a meeting of "kooks and nuts" as the right-wing press describes them, nor are many labor leaders dinosaurs.

The gathering was at its best during the speech of Rep. Ronald Dellums of California. Using the Bakke case as an example, he pointed out that in the 1960s and 1970s, the way people looked then at jobs and discrimination, if 10,000 unemployed applied for ten jobs in Detroit, the argument would be over quotas or affirmative action, and the result might be the hiring of five women, two blacks, one Chicano, one Indian and one person from the Third World. But—Dellums emphasized to thunderous applause—"the politics of the 1980s has to concern itself with the 9,900 who didn't get through the door."

The conference accepted Fraser's recommendation for the appointment of at least two major commissions to see how this new "coalition of coalitions" could be given more substance in terms of issues, and what must be done next to rally the liberals and the labor unions against the attacks by the Right, which in Fraser's words, has "outfought, outlobbied, outworked and outthought labor and its allies in recent times."

What bothers Fraser more than this or that defeat for labor and liberal causes, is the fact that the Right is coming up with new ways to pose old issues. In a word, outthinking the Left of Center groups. Thunder on the Right doesn't scare him; the intellectual paucity on his side does. That was the basic motivation behind the conference. Fraser reminded the younger journalists that in his youth new ideas and action programs came from the Left; he urged that the radical press again play that historic role.

The UAW will now call another, post-election, conference, to assess the political climate, discuss the next steps for the "coalition of coalitions," and see how much of Fraser's basic message sank in. Nobody has passed a law that only one side in America is allowed to play the class struggle game, as General Motors recently learned when it tried a "Southern strategy" on the UAW. Fraser and the UAW are playing for keeps on all fronts.

B.J. WIDICK

Dollar Journalism

Does it matter to the rest of the country that for almost three months now the citizens of its largest city have had to stare restlessly at one another across subway and bus aisles, deprived of their usual screen of a daily newspaper? Almost certainly not. But the New York newspaper strike, dented and perhaps broken by the reappearance of its only evening paper, the *Post*, raises some real questions about the free press as an institution.

It almost seemed that *The New York Times*, the country's leading newspaper, and the *Daily News*, its largest, were out to prove the truth of the words of that hostile critic of the press, Chief Justice Warren Burger, when he wrote (*First National Bank* v. *Bellotti*) about "the difficulty, and perhaps impossibility, of distinguishing, either as a matter of fact or constitutional law, media corporations from corporations such as the appellant in this case." They behaved like the conglomerates they have become.

The rational assumption would be that the stakes in the New York pressmen's strike were enormous for the *Times* and the *News*. But these journals, or corporations, have made no case at all for this. They mutter that the suburban papers get a better deal in their pressrooms, and that this is a "competitive" threat, but they give no specifics for the notion that *The Bergen Record* is somehow competing with the *Times*.

It is nonsense, of course. The last big New York press strike, fifteen years ago, cleared the field, destroying the *Herald Tribune*, the *World-Telegram* and the *Journal-American*. A city of 8 million was left with one class and one mass paper in the morning, both highly profitable, and one struggling evening sheet. The *Times* since then has expanded luxuriantly, becoming a bit of a chain and a broadcaster, and it has lately been earning at the rate of about $12 million a year from its New York property alone. But the "bottom line" glares up at these corporate hierarchs and the pressmen must be made to toe it.

The *Times* and *News* made at least two miscalculations, so there is also comedy in a serious situation. One error was to think that the other newspaper unions would keep on working and let the publishers have their way with the pressmen, as happened at *The Washington Post* (but there was sabotage by the pressmen in that case, disgusting the other workers). The second was that by making the new boy in the field, the *Post*'s Australian publisher, Rupert Murdoch, the nominal chairman of the publishers they could keep him solidly with them. He fooled them, breaking away and resuming publication.

While all this was happening, and not happening, in New York, the corporatization of the American press was picking up speed. The Gannett chain (seventy-seven dailies) is in the act of swallowing an Arizona-based thing called Combined Communications

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Corporation; that will give Gannett seven TV stations, thirteen radio stations and seventy-nine newspapers with a combined circulation of 3.4 million. The deal is for a trifling $370 million and, after its consummation, Gannett will have revenues of some $800 million. Score one more point for Warren Burger.

Each year fifty or sixty papers are made links in chains. Of the 1,759 dailies, about 1,100 are now chained. Some 70% of total daily circulation is controlled by 167 chains. Half of the cities that had competing papers in 1947 now lack them. The three leading chains, Newhouse, Knight-Ridder and Gannett—each of them with more than 3 million circulation—have not a single foreign correspondent among them, a fact which does not inhibit them from freely chiding allies and thundering against adversaries.

Against this super-concentration of the press the palsied antitrust procedures are useless. Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona has a bill in Congress that would put a finger in the dike, perhaps, by stretching out the time newspaper heirs would have to pay inheritance taxes, as an alternative to selling out to chains. But the process of concentration seems irreversible and the prospect is the dismal one of a couple of dozen corporations soon owning all but a handful of newspapers and dishing out a daily diet of pap.

Meanwhile the people of New York go to the polls to elect a state government, dozens of legislators and cast ballots on a number of local issues about which they have the dimmest of ideas because they lack the basic information the newspapers once brought them. Do the Sulzbergers and the heirs of the Pattersons and McCormicks think that for the sake of a percentage point or two on their balance sheets it is worth jeopardizing their own institutions and the institution of a free and constitutionally privileged press in this country?

ARTICLES.

Potted Expertise

(Continued from Front Cover)

anonymous scholars. OPR, to put it bluntly, supplied the agencies with potted scholarship bought from campuses around the country and has had written and got published books which, directly or indirectly, were financed by the agencies whose ends they served.

In drumming up federal grants and contracts OPR has emphasized its access to "scholars and specialists in the social sciences and on foreign areas," its ability to "conduct a wide variety of studies which provide information and analysis for the development of public policy," and its skill in developing "programs designed to disseminate political knowledge and increase its application to public policy." For reasons of expediency—or possibly subterfuge—these services were rendered chiefly by four OPR subsidiaries: the Institute for the Comparative Study of Political Systems (George Demetriou, director); the Institute for Cross-Cultural Research (Theodore Stoddard, director); Independent Research Associates (William R. Hamilton, president), and Editorial Advisory Associates (Cornelius Vahle, director).

The Institute for the Comparative Study of Political Systems, an operation launched with a $110,000 grant from a CIA conduit (the Andreas Foundation), produced research and monographs on "all phases of elections both in the United States and Latin America . . . [based on] investigation of voter behavior and . . . the political and legal contexts of elections." The Institute for Cross-Cultural Research, on the other hand, focused on "the changing cultures of ethnic groups throughout the world" because of the need "to promote better understanding of these people as they attempt to cope with new economic, political, religious and technical situations."

Over the years, roughly half of OPR's income came from USIA contracts involving book and other publication activities quietly carried out for the agency by Editorial Advisory Associates and Independent Research Associates. Some books were written to order for the agency and some were created jointly by USIA and OPR. "Planting" such books with commercial publishing houses was definitely one of OPR's most valued services.

The founding incorporators of OPR—who became its top officers—were two well-connected Washingtonians: Evron Kirkpatrick, executive director of the American Political Science Association, and Max Kampelman, a prominent lawyer and intimate of Sen. Hubert Humphrey. Kirkpatrick brought to OPR's presidency not only the experience he had acquired in ten years of employment in the federal intelligence community (initially as assistant director of research and intelligence in the Office of Strategic Services and later as deputy director of the State Department's Office of Intelligence Research) but also the benefit of his wide influence among political scientists. Kampelman, who had previously served as Senator Humphrey's top aide, had a knack for pulling political strings that he often put to useful account as OPR's vice president.

Thanks to Kirkpatrick's contacts and Kampelman's enterprise, OPR got off to a fair start. During its first year its income from government sources totaled $38,665 ($27,736 for "editorial advisory services," $4,800 for "Congressional history account," and $6,128 for "miscellaneous"). The next three years were much busier: between 1956 and 1959 OPR's combined income totaled $279,169. (See box for some individual projects.)

Whether these or subsequent projects were undertaken for the CIA or USIA is fuzzy, but recently

Allen Boyce is the pseudonym of a former government information official.

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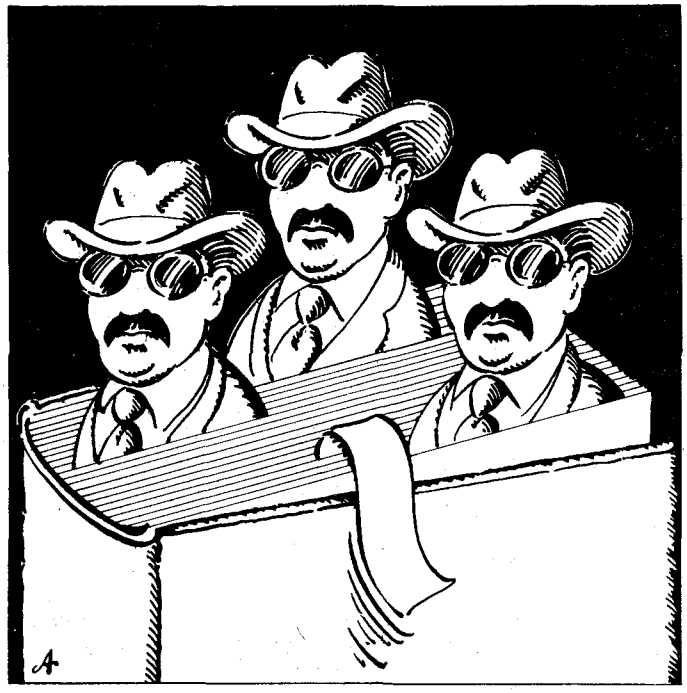

Drawings by John Alcorn

compiled data show that OPR became the beneficiary of considerable largess from foundations the CIA often used as conduits. Between 1963 and 1966 OPR evidently received $547,300 from the following foundations with CIA ties: Andreas Foundation of Minneapolis ($223,000); Pappas Charitable Trust of Boston ($123,800); Granary Fund of Boston ($97,000); Ronthelym Charitable Trust of Boston ($38,500); Lucius Littauer Foundation of New York ($25,000); Sidney and Esther Rabb Charitable Foundation of New York ($25,000), and Ridgefield Foundation of New York ($15,000).

In February 1967 a furor arose among members of the American Political Science Association when Robert Sherrill, *The Nation*'s Washington correspondent, revealed that OPR was surreptitiously involved in questionable CIA and USIA research and publishing projects. Since Kirkpatrick and Kampelman were both key officers of APSA, some scholars felt that it had perhaps become an accomplice, witting or unwitting, of clandestine CIA operations. Accordingly, APSA president, Robert Dahl, appointed a committee to look into OPR's affairs and into "the broader and extremely complex problem of standards of behavior for all political scientists in their relationships with government agencies." The committee's report, rushed into print a month after Sherrill's article appeared, mollified OPR's critics. It declared:

> Nothing that has come to our attention lends the slightest credence to concern that any use might have been made of the APSA for intelligence purposes. There was at no time any connection between OPR and the Association. Kirkpatrick and Kampelman's work with OPR was conducted on their own time, required a minor part of their attention, violated no policy of the Association with respect to outside activities of its staff, and involved no conflict of interest with their responsibilities to the APSA. . . . In conclusion, we think it appropriate to acknowledge, on behalf of the membership of our organization, the great services which both Kirkpatrick and Kampelman have rendered to the American Political Science Association.

Although President Dahl conceded that APSA's members had reason to be concerned about "possible damage" to the profession due to "disclosures about the [CIA's] activities," neither he nor APSA's executive committee saw any reason to question "the conduct and motives of Kirkpatrick and Kampelman . . . [whose] dedication and service to the Association in the past . . . [warrants] our full confidence in the value of their future services."

But if the APSA was not embarrassed by the Kirkpatrick/Kampelman activities, the CIA apparently was. It quickly turned off the money flowing to OPR through its conduits, and the company had to cast about for other government support. Between 1966 and 1976 OPR's contracts with USIA evidently yielded $621,371, requiring part-time assistance from several hundred "scholars and specialists in the social sciences and on foreign areas [who] have prepared, assessed, and edited manuscripts, evaluated translations, and reviewed and condensed books" of special interest to USIA. In the opinion of a contemporary agency official, OPR's book reviews "were exceedingly helpful because they enabled us to decide which of the latest new books were or weren't suitable for our overseas libraries, which we ought to buy in large quantity for distribution among America's friends around the world, and which we ought to encourage foreign publishers to put out in translated form. . . . This wasn't a simple task. We needed the help of sophisticated scholars whose judgment we could rely on because we had been getting complaints from members of Congress for backing books they didn't approve of for one reason or another. . . ."

There is, of course, nothing at all wrong with openly assisting the government, but it is hardly a coincidence that most of OPR's covert projects have involved legally dubious domestic operations of the CIA and the USIA. □

An unpublicized list of OPR's early research projects included the following entries for 1959-60:

Radomir Vaclav Luza—History of Communist Party in Czechoslovakia ($4,000).

S. Walter Washington—Study of Political Trends in Venezuela ($3,500).

George H. Kelly—Study of Political Parties in France ($3,000).

Benjamin Rivlin—Study of North African Affairs ($1,500, summer grant).

Brekh B. Thapa—Study of the Relation of Economic and Social Conditions to the Development of Democratic Government in Southeast Asia ($1,200).

General Samuel Taxis—Study of Pakistan ($14,300).

Robert G. Neumann—Study of Middle Eastern Countries ($5,000).

W. Baczkowski—Study of Russia and the Middle East ($4,000).

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SECOND THOUGHTS

CAREY McWILLIAMS

The Carter administration is to be the beneficiary of a rich patronage plum. Within the next six months, the President will fill an estimated 75% to 80% of 152 new federal judgeships: the largest number ever created by Congress and the first since 1970. Of these appointments 117 will be to district courts, thirty-five to circuit courts of appeals. These are well-paying, prestigious positions, of course, with life tenure, but the President will have to share the plum with others. In 1976, Carter and Griffin Bell met in Atlanta with Sen. James Eastland, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. At this "summit" it was agreed that the newly elected President would respect the privilege Senators enjoy of vetoing nominees to federal judgeships and to the post of U.S. Attorney in their states. But Carter would have the right to fill vacancies on the circuit court by naming commissions that would recommend nominees.

In January 1977, ninety of the ninety-four U.S. Attorneys were Republicans; today, according to the excellent newsletter of the Committee for Public Justice, only fourteen Republicans remain in office. Politically, U.S. Attorneys are extremely important; in effect they decide, with the tacit approval of the Attorney General and the Justice Department, which of the many complaints brought to their attention are to be prosecuted. But U.S. Attorneys serve only four years and can be removed at a moment's notice. In the long run district and circuit court judges have a deeper influence because of their life tenure.

Few Presidents have enjoyed such a patronage bonanza as the 152 court appointments, but the Senate will jealously guard its veto, since the "Atlanta agreement" will no doubt apply to the new appointments. However, Sen. Edward Kennedy, as the next chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has said that he will exercise his influence for a "dramatic" increase in the number of women and blacks on the federal bench—which, it might be noted, is in itself a "political" decision or judgment.

In theory the Attorney General, the federal judiciary and U.S. Attorneys should all be "merit" appointments, but in practice this can only mean the most meritorious appointments that the system permits. Some eighteen states use commissions for nominations to the federal district court, but that method has not worked well. Most of those who sit on the commissions are named or approved by Senators from the particular state. The Attorney General supervises the U.S. Attorneys but, because of the way they are selected, exercises little control over them. Rep. Robert Drinan (D., Mass.) has proposed that the Attorney General alone should hire U.S. Attorneys, without Senate confirmation. But this would vest an awesome power in the Attorney General, a public servant who is himself an appointee and not directly responsible to the people. Sen. Lowell Weicker (R., Conn.) has suggested that the Attorney General should be elected in a non-Presidential election year. But this would push the office directly into politics and might pit an Attorney General of one party against the President of another.

The fact is that no legislative gimmick or arrangement will automatically insure "merit" appointments in the justice system; it is an illusion to think that the problem can be thus "solved." What might help would be to expose potential nominees to public view before their names are submitted to the Senate. If, for example, lists of possible nominees for Attorney General, district and appellate judgeships, and U.S. Attorneys were to be published in the *Federal Register*, with the public given an opportunity to react by a designated date, the President would have the advantage of information about them before he committed himself to particular nominations. Even more effective would be a dogged insistence by the two major parties, the public, and the press that politicians who tried to play politics with Justice Department nominations would be punished at the polls. Political considerations cannot and probably should not be entirely eliminated, but the more flagrant forms of patronage can be minimized, and that is about the best that can be expected, given the present system of making nominations. This system does yield, now and then, unexpected dividends. It is not always possible to determine from an individual's record in the rough-and-tumble world of politics what kind of judge or U.S. Attorney he or she might make. A look at Hugo Black's early record in Alabama (membership in the Ku Klux Klan) and at Earl Warren's record on civil liberties and civil rights in California might have indicated that neither should have been appointed to the Supreme Court. This is not to suggest that a President should gamble on a nominee's turning in a good performance despite a dubious record on certain issues, but a margin should be allowed for growth and improvement if the nominee has a general reputation for intelligence, character and integrity and enjoys impressive sponsorship. Liberal administrations have been surprised and pleased by the performance of conservatives named to the courts, and conservative administrations have been dismayed by the performance of judges who had a record of conservatism. In New York, Judge Thomas P. Griesa's conduct of the case of the Socialist Workers Party must be causing distress to his right-wing sponsors.

In the "dialectic" now involving the President, Governors, Attorney General and Senators it may be possible to minimize patronage in the selection of this unprecedented number of judges. As the system works, political considerations are inevitable but the cruder forms of patronage politics can be avoided, if the public is vigilant and "merit" is given greater stress than in times past. Few issues decided in the next Congress will be of greater long-term importance than the character of the appointments President Carter makes to fill these judgeships. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Allusions to A Presence

DOON ARBUS

WALKER EVANS FIRST AND LAST. *Harper & Row. 199 pp. $29.95.*

Any book of a photographer's work, even one intending to do otherwise, leaves in its wake an impression that glosses over individual pictures in favor of a summary that can encompass them all. The book's physical nature—the fact that like any other it has a beginning, middle and end—seems to promise a kind of narrative, a strange narrative with no words and no plot, but one still capable of disclosures more comprehensive and illuminating than could be expected from a random gathering of its isolated parts. However arresting and singular a photograph may be on its own, once it has been assigned a fixed place amid those around it, it is no longer an independent object but must accommodate itself to the others, must belong. When you look at a collection of photographs this way, slowly turning pages, your eye, without any conscious effort to play detective, begins searching for clues that will stamp it all as the work of a single person. If what you have discovered in the end creates something whole, if the characteristics merge into a character, the book has achieved what it may be best suited for. It has described a complete version of a personality, not the photographer's exactly but the one embodied in his photographs.

The recently published volume of Walker Evans's work which spans an entire career between 1928 and 1973 could probably not have been produced during his lifetime. It profits from being an outsider's view, an admiring and insightful one, singularly appropriate to the nature of what it portrays, but although the man himself might have approved the result, he could not have participated. The artist in him would have insisted on selecting that which most clearly fulfilled his intentions and in doing so would have doomed the intentions to remain half-disguised. These pages indicate how much pictures, lacking a certain authority in themselves, can help clarify the rest. On a tacit assumption that the photographer is long past needing to be proven a master, the book disposes of an obligation to ferret out only his most stellar achievements and frees itself to concentrate on the preoccupations, ideas and ways of seeing that went into making the work.

What emerges is a ghostly portrait of the man behind the photographs. Contrary to that favorite legend of an artist's life in which the novice embarks on a search for his elusive vision and ends by realizing it, here is someone who appears to have been, almost from the outset, fully acquainted with his own view of things and unabashed in the expression of it. The great variety in his work, the changes in subject matter and vantage point—although radical at times with occasional flukes that do not seem to fit at all—never suggests a hierarchical progress but instead a thoroughly sustained horizontal one.

Each photograph, the weakest as well as the most powerful, manifests something deft and unequivocal, a sort of placid certainty which is a function of the eye's intelligence rather than the mind's. It lends the pictures a curiously modest air, permits them simply to state the facts and then, as it were, retire. This disdain for comment or embellishment, this unobtrusiveness, is rooted in a fundamental respect for the integrity of things, but it also implies something fierce as well, an aristocracy of the spirit which feels no easy kinship with what it observes and is either unwilling or unable to tangle with the world. The photograph, in alluding to his presence, renders it utterly enigmatic, rather like God's in that he seems at once everywhere and nowhere. Even when his camera nears its subject, the photographer in his supreme detachment remains remote.

There is, early on, an interest in the sheer geometry of things, of neon signs, bridge struts, skyscrapers in progress. As photographs they are proficient enough in that they show what they mean to show and do so without fussing, but they suffer from a naivete that seems to herald the discovery of triangles and graphs and ellipses in the man-made world. In view of what comes later, they look experimental, as if the photographer had tried on someone else's clothes in order to determine by default the true proportions of his own body. He soon found what suited him: an even, neutral light that neither probes nor dramatizes but simply erases shadows so as to make things clear, and a subject matter composed of the ordinary. If his early photographs forced objects to look less like themselves in order to delineate a perception, the rest of his work sticks resolutely to the bare facts and what began as a fascination with form is transmuted into a subtler sensibility which discovers, in an occasionally unexpected but perfectly natural conjunction of details, a certain innate wholeness.

His task was defined by what he chose to photograph—people and objects and moments distinctly unremarkable in themselves—and by the way he saw them, which refused to make them look remarkable. The problem became, as Virginia Woolf once put it, "how to connect the thing itself with the meaning of the thing," how to prevent it from seeming merely vacuous. Other photographers, faced with a similar dilemma, have resolved it by introducing some implicit drama into the pictures, by using their subjects as metaphors for other things, or by scrutinizing the ordinary so relentlessly that it begins to look surreal. Few have followed Walker Evans's route which appears to have been marked by a complete faith in the evidence and its capacity to speak plainly and eloquently on its own behalf.

Here then are the pictures he has made, his simple statements of fact: the corner of a room with the people gone and a sense of what they left behind of themselves in the furniture, the billboard whose slogan is belied by a glimpse of the surrounding landscape (a photograph which in its sober irony is like the diagram of a joke and as close as he ever comes to being funny). Here are the mining towns, the shop windows, the graveyards for human beings or for abandoned cars, the tenements, the country churches, monuments and winding suburban streets, all apparently deserted at least at the moment he has chosen, yet without any sign of desolation. His natural elegance, so intrinsic to his perception he probably could not have lost it had he wanted to, makes whatever he photographed look graceful and pristine and self-sufficient.

People do turn up but the quality of their presence bears none of the trappings of an individual psychological life or of a sociological symbol. They belong only to the moment and place in which he found them, belong to in much the same way as a telephone pole or a chair does. It is not

Doon Arbus is a free-lance writer. She edited and helped design the book of her mother's photographs, Diane Arbus (Aperture).

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that he has turned them into objects but that in taking note of their clothes, their expressions, the way they walk, he has discreetly kept his distance and left them part of their surroundings. They are the subway passengers, the members of a crowd, the clumps of passing strangers on a city street, and it is in the guise of strangers that they appear.

None of this looks the least bit exotic or romantic or sentimental but it never quite becomes familiar either. In fact the pictures often call into question any easy familiarity you might have thought you had with things. In his photograph, a country church plunked with such apparent artlessness in the center of the frame, refuses to be taken for granted and demands the sort of mute attention accorded a pyramid. Its structure no longer seems to explain its function and, although in some respect you continue to know perfectly well what it really is, you are also impelled to recognize it as a testament to a network of exigencies and hopes which no amount of contemplation will ever entirely fathom.

For this body of work documenting the artifacts of the past several decades, Walker Evans acquired a reputation as a historian. He became the photographer who would show you America, not as his followers have done, gritty with some gaping hollow at the core, but the America of a dispassionate chronicler. Although it is difficult to believe he did not consider himself essentially an artist, he seems to have welcomed the role bestowed on him. It granted him a certain anonymity and made him a simpler and nobler figure than the one conjured by this book. If his motives were really only those of a chronicler, to record his own time so that the future could not entirely forget, they produced results more intricate than he intended.

Fortunately for the photographs, their documentary aspect is seeping away now and they have begun to take on the quality of meditations. What you see in them is not quite America any more and probably never was. Although the photographs in this book cover a period of more than forty years and have been ranged in roughly chronological sequence, for all their impartial and meticulous attention to detail, they fail to produce any marked impression of the passage of time or of any real changes in the world. They belong to a ghostly realm of their own which is neither quaint nor contemporary and which has about it none of the messy day-to-day flux of ordinary life.

The only explanation for how this may have come about lies in the nature of the man who took the pictures. Whatever the eventual fate of the things he photographed, they did not then exist as potential relics destined for extinction, yet that is precisely how the pictures see them. It is almost as if the photographer took an intuitive glimpse into the future and in light of what he discovered there, perceived everything around him as a relic already.

This deep conviction of impermanence of civilization is at once a philosophical and personal stance that informs all his work. If there were ever anything in him that rebelled against it, the rebellion had been quashed or otherwise settled long before he took these pictures. Nothing in them bemoans the inevitable passing or claims any special consideration for its victims on the basis that they will not endure forever. Instead he seems to have discovered something beautiful and expressive about the discarded remnants of a civilization which, in their pristine clarity, continue to whisper secret allusions to the life they once contained.

If his photographs are growing less reliable as evidence of how things used to be, they are simultaneously becoming more eloquent expressions of the man himself: an aristocrat who wore the most unassuming air because his belief in his own authority admitted of no argument, someone with a talent for and devotion to plain speech who stood always aloof, not quite part of his own time, and who in recognizing the transitoriness of what lay around him, accepted it, embraced it even, simply because he knew it lay in the nature of things to have it so. □

Mac the Flack

BLAIR CLARK

AMERICAN CAESAR. DOUGLAS MacARTHUR 1880-1964. *By William Manchester. Little Brown and Co. 709 pp. $15.*

How long must we put up with the myth of General MacArthur—as our "greatest soldier," as gallant hero turned peacemaker and democratically benign proconsul, and finally as "Caesar"? This "big book" (in the sense of size and commercialism) perpetuates these and other legends about Douglas MacArthur while using all the countervailing tricks of objectivity. He was, as Manchester might say, "flawed" but the construction of this work amounts to the scaffolding for a heroic statue.

Consider first the question of his ability as a military commander. It is simply wrong to call him "in fact our greatest soldier," as John K. Fairbank does in *The New York Review of Books*. By any serious measure, Lee, Grant and Sherman, in what is still our greatest war, all faced greater problems of combat and solved them more brilliantly. Even on the purely military level, leaving out the political complications of the disunited states, George Washington outshone MacArthur in strategy by far. And it can be argued that in World War II both George Marshall as Chief of Staff and the modest Omar Bradley as Commander of the First Army Group in Europe had larger military accomplishments on their records than MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific. The colossal reputation rests more on sheer longevity, plus scandalous self-promotion, than it does on striking deeds, and it requires the forgetting of MacArthur's part in the debacle in the Philippines in 1942.

And what about the "Caesar" tag? Was MacArthur "a demagogue of genius and an astute politician," in the words of J.F.C. Fuller, "who strove to undermine the authority of the Senate (read government) and impose his will on the republic" and could he "relate war with politics" and succeed in his destructive purpose? Of course not. Manchester's title is just a buzz-phrase, purely promotional. The sole semblance of Caesarism in MacArthur is that he was in effect our proconsul in Japan (though with no military role to play). By the time he challenged the civil authority of his country, largely out of vanity after his defeats in Korea, he was at the end of his long career with nowhere to go. MacArthur was no more a Caesar than Truman or Acheson were Ciceros.

This is not to say that MacArthur lacked political ambition. He was in fact consumed with it. Roosevelt, whom MacArthur regarded as his great rival and obstacle, understood that better than anyone. But FDR was at his foxiest in handling MacArthur the cowardly political lion. He patronized him, out-patricianed him, flattered him and frustrated him at every turn, magisterially. Tugwell records Roosevelt's remark during the depth of the depression that Huey Long and MacArthur were the two most dangerous men in the country, meaning that they represented threats to the Republic. But even after MacArthur's vainglorious and brutal dispersal of the pathetic Bonus Marchers when he was Army Chief of Staff under Hoov-

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er—dreaming of himself as a man on horseback against the "Communists" and incidentally disgusting his aide Eisenhower—Roosevelt knew that the General lacked the courage to go all the way, to a coup.

Caesar, of course, began as a politician and became a military commander when the demands of the state and thus of his own ambitions bent him that way. MacArthur's sequence was the reverse, glory leading to office seeking. But he was host to the political virus from the start, the fever originating with the frustrations of his father's career. Arthur MacArthur, hero of Missionary Ridge, 19-year-old colonel of Wisconsin infantry, winner of all the medals, conqueror and would-be Christianizer-Americanizer of the Philippines, never made it to Chief of Staff because he had had the bad judgment to treat with the most arrogant contempt an Ohio politician named William Howard Taft and the civilian commission sent out to Manila to replace his military rule of that "liberated" land.

From his revered father, and encouraged by his adored mother, he inherited a bitter contempt for civilian authority, along with a prose style of impenetrably ornate pomposity. (Neither father nor son could have read, or

at least appreciated, the plain and moving style of Ulysses S. Grant in his memoirs or when he wrote, at the time of the relief of that other political General McClellan, that "No man can be efficient as a commander who sets his own notions above law and those he has sworn to obey. When Congress enacts anything too odious for me to execute, I will resign.")

MacArthur's real genius was as a flack. It was his idea in 1917, when he was Secretary of War Newton D. Baker's PR man, to put National Guard units from several states into one division and to call this 42nd Infantry Division the "Rainbow." But the main product he promoted was himself and his own career. This he did shamelessly the whole time and winning medals was the best device. Denied by a review board the Congressional Medal he had put himself in for after a solo reconnaissance (no witnesses) behind Mexican lines in the Vera Cruz expedition of 1914, MacArthur had the nerve to send a memorandum to the Chief of Staff saying that he was "incensed" by the board's "rigid narrowmindedness and lack of imagination." Some Regulars never forgave him for that.

In World War I, as Chief of Staff and then brigade and division commander of the 42nd, he was always in the front lines, spurning regulations and never wearing helmet or gas mask or carrying a weapon. There can be no doubt about his martial courage and exemplary leadership. In these actions he won more medals than anyone. But how inspiring in fact were these bravura performances? Polybius twenty-two centuries ago asked "what . . . can be less practical and more dangerous than a commander's being seen by all his troops, but seeing none of them?" And Gen. James Gavin, an equally brave soldier, reviewing Manchester's book in *The New Republic*,

"Readable . . . engaging . . . [de Silva] has made a case for a strong, effective intelligence apparatus." —The Washington Post

SUB ROSA THE CIA AND THE USES OF INTELLIGENCE

In the midst of constant attack from the media and accusations of government whitewash, Peer de Silva reveals firsthand the realities of CIA policies and operations. Over a thirty-year career at the operations level, beginning at the very founding of the CIA, de Silva tells a story that's full of **"action . . . spy adventure . . . [and] exotic romance."**— *Publishers Weekly*

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notes that there is nowhere any evidence in all these exercises in leadership in three wars that MacArthur ever asked his soldiers the normal morale-building questions about their rations, supplies and spirits. "He behaved," Gavin writes, "as though he were on stage and was there to be seen, posing and being defiant against the enemy." Only once in the four months of the grinding Bataan campaign, while he was strutting on the rock of Corregidor across the bay, did he make the five-minute boat ride to see for himself the sad state of General Wainwright's starving command.

It was PR all the time, "I" against "them," as in "I shall return" to the Philippines, his inherited fief. One legend is that MacArthur's Southwest Pacific command made the main effort against Japan; the truth is that it was generally secondary to Admiral Nimitz's Central Pacific attack up the chain of outer islands. For a dreadful moment it looked as if the Joint Chiefs would bypass the Philippines, nullifying MacArthur's famous promise, and approach Japan via Formosa, but finally he had his way. It was essential to him to redeem that pledge, if only because he knew, even if he could not admit, that he bore a large share of the responsibility for the disaster of Bataan, still the worst military defeat in our history (he had lost almost his entire air force by leaving them sitting on Clark Field hours after Pearl Harbor, and he had failed to put supplies on Bataan in his absurd overconfidence). And, to go on puncturing his inflated claims, MacArthur did not invent island-hopping or triple-envelopment (by land, sea and air), nor is there anything to his back-patting comparison between his casualties in these operations and the higher casualty ratios in the much larger battles in Europe against the massed armies of Germany.

Finally we come to MacArthur as Shogun ("barbarian-subduing great general") of Japan, and then Korea. The whole edifice of democratic Japan did not spring from the brow of this proconsul. The constitution imposed on the crushed Japanese was largely composed by obscure specialists in the State Department; he added, with kowtowing help from his subjects, the famous and dubious flourish in which "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation." The truth is that the constitution was the only kind of "reform" that *this* kind of victorious nation could have imposed on *that* kind of conquered one. MacArthur's main political contribution to the reconstitution of Japan was perhaps that it came naturally to him to act as remote as a Shinto Emperor.

Korea, MacArthur's last act, shows him at his best (the Inchon landing, against all advice) and at his worst. He panicked in defeat after the Chinese, against all his assurances, came into the war and then, defying his civilian and military superiors, he tried to generalize the war to get out of that bad local scrape. He had no understanding of what Clausewitz meant when he wrote that war "is a thing that is sometimes more war, sometimes less." For him, at least rhetorically, there was "no substitute for victory," and he was quite ready to risk total war in order to cover up his defeat in a limited one. In pushing for his "solution," he used geopolitical arguments of an almost puerile foolishness. It was astonishing and depressing that so many politicans, and not just Republicans, took them seriously. The American sentimentality over a "hero" was at its worst.

But to balance this analysis (and not in Manchester's pastiche style), it should be said that the best excuse for MacArthur and his downfall in Korea lies in the calculated ambiguity of the orders he got from his government. Truman and the Joint Chiefs in fact wanted MacArthur to go all the way and "unify" Korea—but they wanted him to take all the risks of provoking the Chinese intervention while formally instructing him to avoid that very thing. His superiors could not have it both ways, but they tried, ingloriously.

In a sense, MacArthur's last act shows him as a tragic figure, brought down by his own pride and his government's carelessness. But he saw it as a kind of triumph, of course, and returned at last to collect his laurels in the country he had not seen for sixteen years, except for one glimpse. He had a last pathetic flirt with politics in 1952, after the comedies of 1944 and 1948, and then had to watch as his former aide and PR man, Eisenhower, who used to say that he studied drama under MacArthur, won the coveted office. Having just been a man of all-out war, he made one of his quick switches and became a man of peace (the Republicans wanted lower budgets in those innocent days before the military-industrial complex became the engine of the economy).

He ended his long life comfortably living in New York's Waldorf-Astoria, serving as titular chairman of Sperry-Rand and carefully nursing his legend by an outpouring of fustian oratory. Always seeing himself as the expert on "the Oriental mind," he advised John F. Kennedy not to get bogged down in the Asia he claimed to know so well, and especially not in Indochina. If the winds of public opinion had shifted on this, he would have swung with the weathervane as he always did.

MacArthur was an interesting character, for sure—brave and yet unsure of himself, mother-fixated to an astonishing degree, a throwback to feudal traditions his country lacked, a knight reincarnated as a flack. In his compendious way, Manchester suggests all of this, but the work is a better "read" than it is a book. □

An Exemplary Life

SAMUEL HYNES

E.M. FORSTER: A Life. *By P.N. Furbank. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 359 pp. $19.95.*

Next New Year's Day will be the centenary of the birth of E.M. Forster. It seems impossible that he was born that long ago, for he managed to become, and to remain, a part of *our* time, a representative 20th-century figure. Not a representative modern artist—all but one of his novels were written before World War I, and they are as relentlessly Edwardian as Galsworthy's—but a modern ethical example, a sort of liberal saint. It's odd that liberals should need saints: conservatives do without them, and radicals prefer martyrs; and odder still that they should choose such an unlikely figure as the retiring, reluctantly political Forster. But then, liberalism is the politics of reluctance, so perhaps Forster *is* the true saint, after all.

Novelist and Saint define two distinct parts of Forster's life, so distinct that they are almost two lives, divided roughly by the war. In his first life, Forster grew up as a mother's boy among aunts (his father had died in 1880), went to Cambridge, returned to his mother's house in Kent, and wrote novels. From time to time he traveled to Italy—with his mother, of course—after which he returned to England and wrote melodramatic novels about traveling in Italy.

By the time he was 34, Forster had written four novels, and was recognized as a novelist of importance. But he had never lived alone, or had a job, or made love to anyone of either sex.

Samuel Hynes is the author of The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s *(Viking).*

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Indeed, he had never done anything that you could call living; no wonder he felt, at the moment of his first success, that he was dried up and sterile. In June of 1911 he tried to write down the causes of his sterility:

> 1. Inattention to health—curable. 2. Weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat—the love of men for women & vice versa. Passion & money are the two main springs of action (not of existence) and I can only write of the first & of that most imperfectly. . .3. Depressing and enervating surroundings. My life's work, if I have any, is to live with a person who thinks nothing worth while.

There are two revealing remarks here: "can *and may* treat"—Forster was feeling the restraints of the unwritten law which said that love in fiction meant heterosexual love, a subject about which he knew nothing; and "My life's work . . . "—he was also feeling the restraints of life with mother.

Then, in the years just before the War, two liberating things happened to him. In 1912 he traveled to India without his mother (though she insisted on accompanying him as far as Naples), and the experience of India freed his imagination from the confines of middle-class, suburban England and made his greatest novel possible. The following year he paid a visit to Edward Carpenter, the homosexual prophet and simple-lifer, and there Carpenter's friend George Merrill touched Forster on the backside. "The sensation," Forster later recalled, "was unusual . . . It was as much psychological as physical. It seemed to go straight through the small of my back into my ideas, without involving my thoughts." It wasn't that Forster discovered at that moment his own homosexuality—he must have known about that all along; but he discovered that homosexual feelings might be freely expressed, and with mutual pleasure, and that was a possibility that he hadn't acknowledged before. That touch freed Forster's imagination from heterosexual conventions, as India had freed him from suburbs, though in this case, alas, it made his *worst* novel, *Maurice*, possible.

Forster's second life began there. The war came, and he went to Egypt as a Red Cross worker—and there he fell in love with an Egyptian tram conductor and had his first experience of sexual love. The effect was profound: "It isn't happiness," he wrote to a friend, "it's rather—offensive phrase—that I first feel a grown up man." (He was then 38.) After the war he returned to India as secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas, and there, too, he managed to satisfy his sexual needs. He went back to England and completed the novel that he had begun before the war, *A Passage to India;* for the first and only time he was able to deal with large themes—with politics and imperialism, with religion, with race, and with love between men. Compared to the earlier novels, it is a book of great artistic and emotional freedom.

But it was his last novel; the forces that had freed him from inhibitions and self-doubt had silenced his imagination. Thereafter Forster entered more and more into the public world of opinon; he lectured, he reviewed, he talked on the BBC, he wrote articles, and he wrote books—more books *after* his last novel than before. All of this later writing is one continuous public gesture, the testament of a liberal: a shy man's public statements of his

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private beliefs about politics, social values and behavior, and personal freedom. During the 1930s especially he seemed to many minds to represent *the* English liberal, standing awkwardly but stubbornly between the Fascists and the Communists, testifying to the value of personal relationships and the private life.

P.N. Furbank's biography of Forster might well have been subtitled "A Liberal Life." Furbank examines very sensitively all the things that *liberal* meant in Forster's case, where they came from, and what the limits of his liberalism were (his distrust of politics, for example, and his awkwardness in matters of class and money). Or it might have been subtitled "A Homosexual Life." Forster had written to T.E. Lawrence, "When I die and they write my life they can say everything," and he clearly meant that the truth of his sexual life should be made explicit no doubt as an encouragement to other shy young men. Furbank has been faithful to this charge, though he has kept his sense of proportion: "everything" about Forster's life includes his writing and his public life as well as his youthful crushes and his later affairs with sailors and policemen (he favored men who were different from himself, either by race or by class). As a frank account of a homosexual life the book has considerable interest as social history, for even in this liberated time most heterosexuals probably don't know, and find it impossible to imagine, what life is like for a sensitive, good man who loves other men. Forster's life may not be a typical case, though I think it probably was for his class and time. He was inhibited and awkward, and he never got over the feeling that his sexual nature was a "condition," like asthma or erysipelas but he believed in human relationships, and he went on trying, as he puts it in *Howard's End*, to "Only Connect." In this sense it is an exemplary life.

Furbank knew Forster during his last years at Cambridge, and he has written from a position of both knowledge and affection, but he has skillfully avoided the dangers of hagiography; his Forster is admirable, but he is also sometimes ridiculous, petty, wrongheaded, perverse. The tone is objective, even a little remote, with one exception. In the next-to-last chapter Furbank draws on his own memories and notes of his meetings with the old man at King's to write "E.M. Forster Described," a sudden change of scale and tone that is dramatically effective and very moving.

Nothing in Furbank's book is likely to change the way anyone feels about Forster's novels, or to arrest the slow but steady decline of his reputation (a decline that parallels the decline of the word *liberal* as a term of approbation). It will tell you a good deal about the biographical bases of the books, and especially of *A Passage to India*, but it isn't primarily an artist's life—how could it be, when the art ended so early, and the life went on so long? It is, rather, what used to be called a "Life and Times." And since it was an exemplary life, in times that are still our own, it merits our attention. It is also a marvelously written book; Forster would be pleased that not only has everything been said, but that it has been said well. □

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A Discomfiting Sense of Nothing

FRANKLIN RUSSELL

AUDUBON. *By John Chancellor. The Viking Press. 224 pp. $17.95.*

OF WOLVES AND MEN. *By Barry Holstun Lopez. Charles Scribner's Sons. 309 pp. $14.95.*

A WALK THROUGH THE YEAR. *By Edwin Way Teale. Dodd, Mead & Co. 408 pp. $15.*

Man and nature is the theme here, intentionally or not, in three books which could not be more unlike. A precise and cultivated antiquarian writes a biography of a semi-literate and eventually insane bird artist. A lean and watchful observer of the wilderness seeks to expose the heart of the wolf. A tireless walker in the American woods chronicles a directory of natural historical detail.

The lack of observable relationship between the books quietly dramatizes the conflict that they all suggest. There is something out there, in that world of "the furry, feathered, forest folk," as a scornful fifth generation Manhattan resident once described it to me, that really bothers us. The John James Audubon described by John Chancellor sought to bend nature double, to force its surrender, and extract gold from its submission. Barry Lopez illuminates man-nature through the sensibilities of the wolf itself and he is not happy about what he finds. Teale alone is untroubled, but his relentless compilation of detail builds a gap between man and animal that cannot be bridged with words.

Franklin Russell has written many books on natural history including Watchers at the Pond *(Knopf).* The Secret Islands *(Norton) and* Wild Creatures *(Simon & Schuster).*

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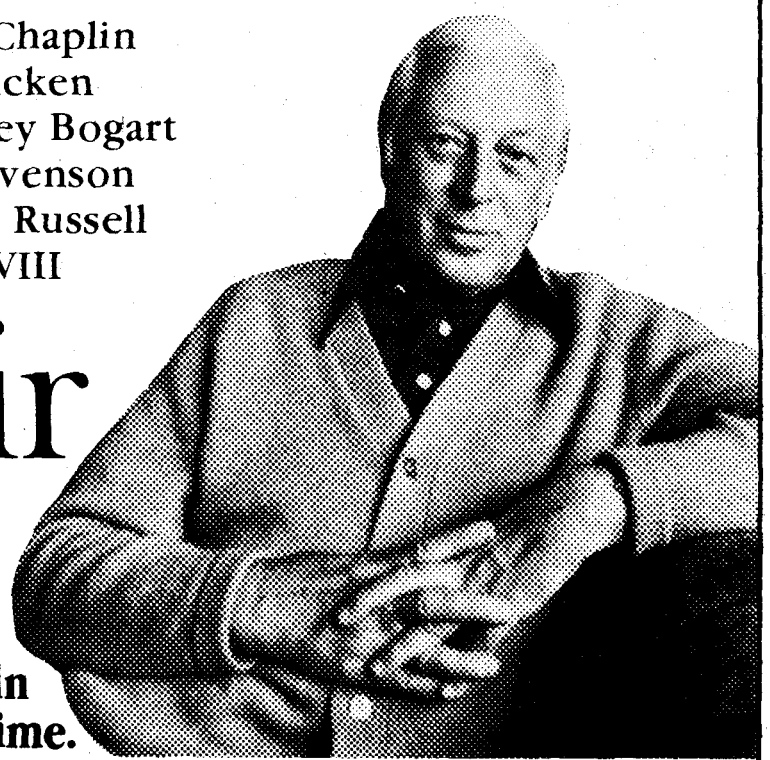

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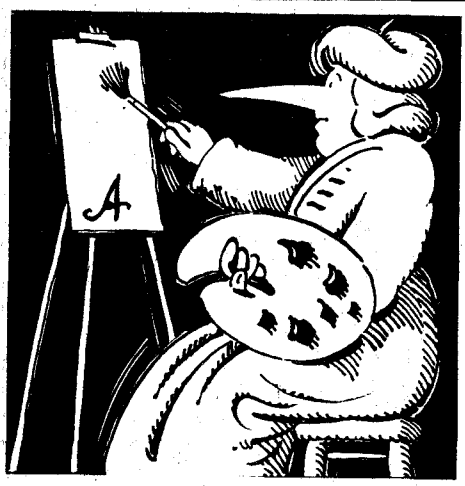
And so, to me at least, all reveal the unease of this century as it is perceived that we are placed in a scheme of life that is millions of years old and we try to survive with techniques that were developed late yesterday afternoon There is a cosmic plan to life which includes star signals and race memories but we entrust our government to men and women who still have the quaint notion that human nature is actually controlled by laws.

There we are, a species looking outward with an awesome command of detail, but what we see adds up to nothing. It becomes more incomprehensible the longer we look at it. That sublime scientific habit of amassing details unfortunately did not include the capability of intuitive comprehension that once used to make magic and miracles. Yet it is a magic planet, and our alienation from it is inevitable and involuntary.

There are any number of ways of attempting to handle this conflict, none of them much good. Audubon sought to get it all down on paper, to make art out of every single bird in North America, a stupendous project in the first part of the 19th century, a formidable notion even today. Lopez seeks to illuminate the alienation by



revealing—suggesting rather—the way life might work when it is correctly set in its suitable environment. Teale attempts to immerse himself in a staggering compendium of detail so that *oneness* with nature will occur by osmosis.

All such attempts to know nature are failed enterprises. Lopez outlines the failure in his examination of Indian and Eskimo associations with wolves. These primitives spend all their lives in the bitter hardships of trek and freeze, hunger and accident, to build up immense personal mosaics of detail which yield insight. The white man never has time for such prolonged harvesting. He must hurry on to do another half-assed job. If he wants insights he switches on his computers, which never tell him the truth.

Audubon will do as well as any other 19th-century hero of the wilderness as exemplar of hurrying onward to nowhere. He became a folk hero in both Europe ("a Rousseau of the West") and in America (where he was entertained by Andrew Jackson in the White House) as he plunged on with his Great Idea, to draw "all the American birds, life-size and in their natural surroundings." When he set out he was 35, dyspeptic, semi-literate, and bankrupt, ". . . . Without any Money My Talents are to be My Support. . . ."

He moved through America like an angel of death, shooting, skinning, stuffing, pickling, preserving thousands of birds. He fancied himself as an intrepid woodsman, a bold frontier fellow who chucked his dice at death and laughed at physical hardship. He could talk up this stuff, too, and whole cities fell under his charm.

This was during an age, not only of pioneers fighting Indians but of cities swollen with immigrants, many of them refugees from farms, all of them confused by the chaos and filth and injustice and madness of the city. Audubon told how it was, out there in the dangerous boonies. He was on to the next city before anybody might question why his best story about the conquest of the wilderness was actually set in a thickly settled farming region, far from the frontier.

Audubon was a great character, burning and obsessed. He met Daniel Boone, although his description of the man is totally different from any other. According to his enemies, which numbered many, he had a lordly contempt for the facts of habit, plumage and background of his bird subjects. He slaved at his pictures, created an extraordinary melange of meticulous accuracy, artistic grotesquerie and clumsy ignorance. He drew a herring gull cutting across the sky like a falcon, its eye bright, its body taut. But the pose, like many Audubon drew, has nothing to do with herring gulls or with flight. It is the picture of a bird flung up on a beach, its body locked in the characteristic stiffness of death.

Audubon did not care. He was revealing nature for the way it really was, the way that Audubon said it was, and for these 19th-century city rubes, that was good enough for the time being. His eyes became blank, staring, as he labored twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day in drawing. "My best friends regard me as a madman," he said. John Chancellor observes dryly

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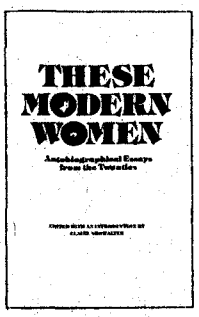

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that Audubon was certainly no patron saint of birds. "He becomes steadily more unattractive as the book progresses," says the author.

The 19th century exemplifies the kind of subjugation of nature that Audubon practiced. Barry Lopez personifies the radical change of attitude that is occurring in the comparatively recent years of this century. He seeks to force a change of heart in his readers, not merely in seeing the wolf as a relatively harmless and resourceful wild dog but also in harshly judging humanity for such tireless attempts to wipe out the wolf wherever it is found across the Northern Hemisphere.

He brings together the wolf, the white man, the Paleolithic hunter, the history and interaction with civilization, the mythology, the literature. It is, in many respects, a pioneering work of natural history which brings the story into the modern reality of gunmen searching for wolves in airplanes. His unsentimental conclusion is that little is known about the wolf and most of man's knowledge about the animal is the prejudice of a created history. "We are going to have to find a way, not necessarily to esteem, but at least not to despise, intuition in the scientific process, for it is, as Kepler and Darwin and Einstein have said, the key," says Lopez.

But to do this, we have to go out into the woods, and man, it's cold out there; dangerous too. Teale saunters on. The snow flies through the dark empty branches of February and the moon curves down toward its meeting with the distant pines. His diary sets it all down, day by similar day, and he is not puzzled that the only reason he is there at all is because some nasty fellows preceding him wiped out all the wolves.

With the wolves sent to the wall, and the cougars blasted to hell, and the dangerous bears rifled into the gully, it is possible to expatiate on the beauty of nature, and what it all means. We are torn, in this transitional point between barbarian and aesthete, by the conflicts between security and comfort and conquering Everest alone. It is, of course, useless to look to nature for any answers or comfort unless you are first prepared to live the life as she commands. □

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Farewell, The Secret Garden

EARL ROVIT

FAIRY TALES AND AFTER: From Snow White to E.B. White. *By Roger Sale. Harvard University Press. 286 pp. $11.*

Roger Sale's *Fairy Tales and After*, a meditative survey of some of the traditional staples of children's literature, is something of a quirky enterprise. Determined as a literary critic to deal with children's literature *as* literature, Sale deliberately rejects the temptation to posit his inquiries on anthropological, folkloristic, sociological or psychological bases. Instead, he will read the literary texts with the same standards and expectations that he would bring to any piece of "adult" literature; that is, he will attempt to account in literary terms for "the magic and power" that appears to reside in these texts. The results, however, are remarkably tepid, and I'm not at all sure why this is so. Sale is intelligent, perceptive, informed, and eager to be properly appreciative; and writers like Perrault, the Grimms, Andersen, Grahame, Kipling, Baum and E.B. White are certainly worthy of a sustained disinterested consideration. Still, for the most part, Sale's examination consists mostly of plot summary, some recourse to biography, more than a little belaboring of the obvious, and occasional flashes of genuine insight (as in his analysis of the function of "the enclosed space" in the Beatrix Potter books).

Whatever the cause, I found my attention wandering to tangential matters, and I beg indulgence to commit the reviewer's primal sin by talking about my own random reactions rather than his measured study. First, of course, was the obligatory response of disdain to the whole conception of Sale's project. Was nothing to be held sacred and undefiled? Must we muscle in everywhere—into the nursery as well as the boudoir—striving to capture with our clumsy calipers the tenuous fabric of our spontaneous life? Fortunately, this feeling was short-lived. Yes, apparently we *do* have to

Earl Rovit is a novelist who teaches English at the City College of New York.

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try to examine anything and everything that we can drag into blurry focus. Personal or cultural self-consciousness needs no justification beyond its own compulsion. We can only hope that the quasi-spontaneous urgencies of the nursery and the boudoir may survive the pedagogues, the statisticians, the hygienists and the therapists of all persuasions. Threatened by such formidable social manipulators as these, the protectors of children's literature would be silly to regard a literary critic as a whit more feral than a paper tiger.

Second, and at the risk of entering the serpent's nest of claims and counterclaims as to what precisely defines children's literature, I found myself proposing a magisterial principle on the relationship of literary criticism to children's literature. Judging almost wholly on the evidence of Sale's (and Bettelheim's) forays into the field, I would suggest that successful children's literature may be that kind of narrative—generally believed to be especially enjoyable to younger readers—which exists so intensely on the surface of its presentation as to make any attempt to explicate that surface fruitless. By that token, for example, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Alice in Wonderland* are specimens of something more than or at least different from *The Three Musketeers* or *Babar* or *The Jungle Books*. In other words, whenever the critic can enhance the enjoyment of the text with an interesting literary hypothesis or some illuminating literary inferences, he is dealing with a narrative form that differs not at all from any other piece of "adult" literature. Therefore, literary criticism of children's literature can serve at best to isolate those texts (which may or may not be enjoyed by younger people) which are not finally children's literature at all.

Preening myself then on this newly discovered truth, I had to draw back in chagrin when I recognized that the same magisterial principle would also apply to historical romances, detective and mystery stories, and science fiction. Nonetheless, I was not to be daunted. Out of all this grinding and grit, some pearl, no matter how small, must be seized. These aforementioned subclasses of literature are always capable of producing a maverick or rogue elephantasist who breaks out of his form: a chronicler like Tolstoy, mystery writers like Dostoevsky and Faulkner, a fantasy writer like Poe or Garcia Marquez or LeGuin. But, at the same time, the subclasses themselves—existing intensely on the surfaces of their presentations almost as verbal movies—are simply examples of children's literature adapted to the tastes of larger children, and my hard-won magisterial principle remains in effect.

But there was even a third level of cerebral grumbling which Sale's study stimulated in me and this is more difficult to articulate. Thinking about children's literature is the surest way of unbridling the arrogantly subjective, the maudlin-autobiographical, the sentimental and the hypocritical—at least in a reader like me. As a child—and later as a parent inordinately proud of his histrionic vocal delivery—I had read many of the books Sale discusses, but to be honest, I had forgotten most of them. I know that I read and reread all the Lang *Fairy Books* because I can remember their colors, but Tunis and Terhune and Ralph Henry Barbour were surely warmer to my soul than Baum or Kipling or Grahame. I would admit further that in a lifetime of obsessive reading, I don't believe that I have ever encountered an "adult" novel that has given me more sheer joy than Doyle's *The White Company* or Kenneth Roberts's *Rabble in Arms*. Doubtless this is a matter of maturity and enthusiasm and I have no desire to catalogue a competition among nostalgic book titles.

What concerns me more is the question of verbal texture in the formative childhood years. It seems to be true that children read less for pleasure now than they used to, and such reading as they do is likely to be more and more an appendage to cartoon illustrations. I think there is good reason to suppose that the verbal imagination is at the very root of the capacity to perceive. Although literature is popularly considered to be an "abstract" art because it must be mediated rather than concretely received from the raw senses, I think this popular notion is grossly false. Most of us, I believe, are likely to translate our sensory experiences into pre-verbal forms in order to meditate on and understand those experiences. Memory and the imagination—self-awareness, in effect—operate in terms of metaphor, and the verbal metaphor is the most natural option for man, that peculiar animal with the power to speak and to name himself with words.

With this in mind, Sale's book suggests some doleful conclusions. The classics of children's literature, existing intensely on the verbal surfaces of their presentations, achieved at least two important ends. They provided the youthful reader with a rudimentary foundation of verbal texture and they demonstrated undeniably the pleasures of escape and discovery that were accessible to a young person through the agencies of verbal metaphor. Television, the movies, and cartoon publications have increasingly superseded pleasure-reading as a juvenile obsession, satisfying the need for escape but without exercising the imaginative energies of the youthful intelligence. *Star Wars* is thrilling and thoroughly engaging to a young enough mind, but it requires nothing of that mind but passivity. Doubtless this kind of fare offers a stock of pictorial cliches comparable in kind to the verbal cliches of traditional fiction, but with this major difference: a verbal cliche or a sequence of narrative cliches is potentially volatile; the verbal material settles into the imagination where it becomes part of the cognitive process.

Most of us communicate with ourselves in verbal or pre-verbal patterns and it is hard for me to see how personality can develop healthily without an inner dialogue. And, secondly, the reading experience is exquisitely private and legitimately solipsistic—unlike the viewing experience which is

SONG

Floating up the iron stairs
of the library stacks, a girl's small voice
softly singing "Deep Purple,"
followed by the girl herself clutching
to her breast a big volume
like a child in her bare arms
or change of linen.

Her smile, as we passed, slowed my descent
a little to listen hard to that music
gliding down behind her, fluent
as a bridal train as she went higher
and higher into the silence of knowledge
above me and the book of my wonder
opened to a clean page.

Leonard Nathan

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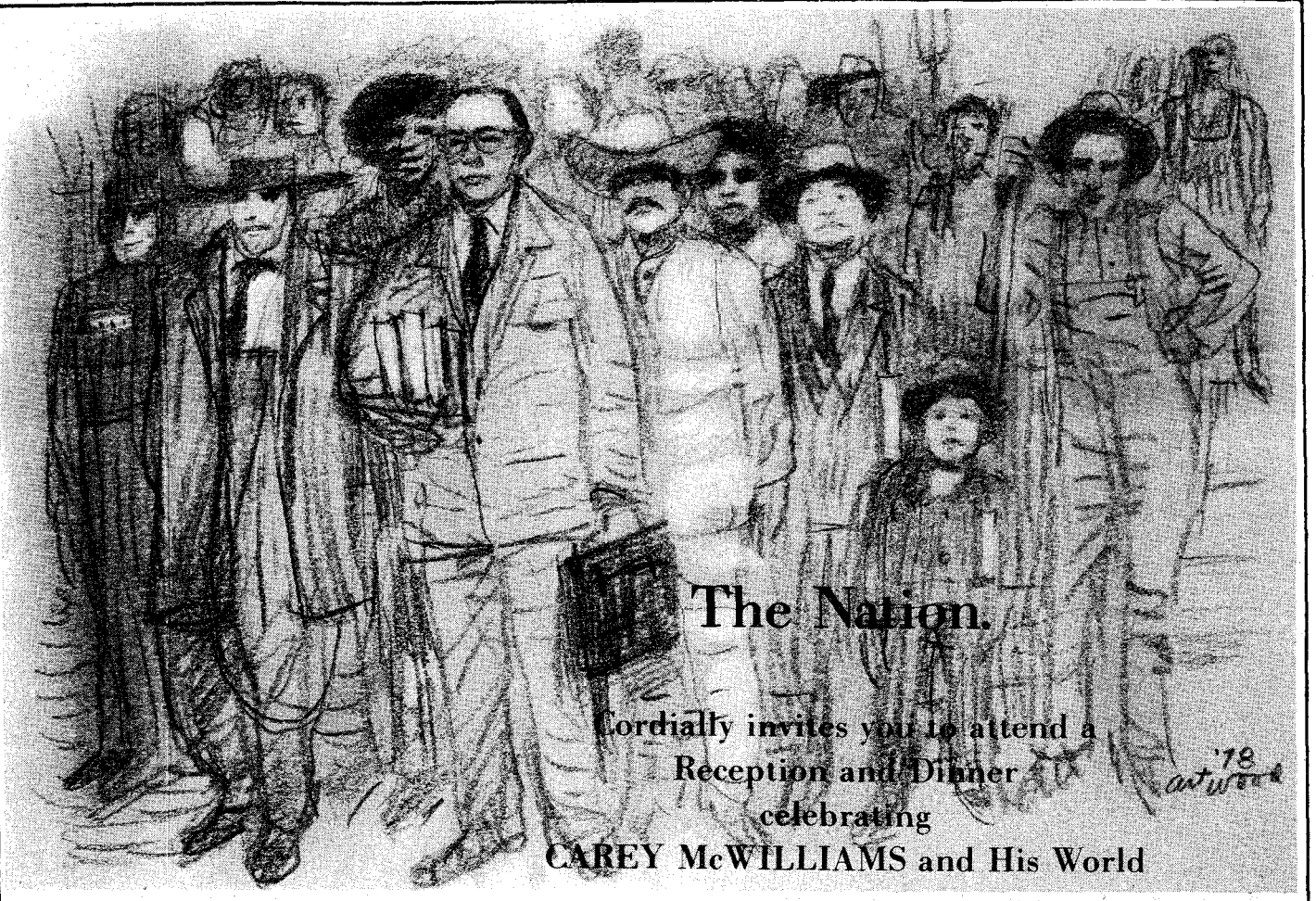

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both socialized and authoritarian in the guidance which it imposes on the viewer. Thus, at a stage of maturation in which the nascent personality desperately needs a core of solitude in which to flex its own growth, the child as viewer tends to become a socialized consumer—in fact, both a consumer and an interchangeable commodity in a commodity-culture.

Be that as it may, the slovenliness of contemporary social discourse, the trend of decreasing scores on the SATs, the need for remediation in reading and writing in even prestige colleges—these indices of our willingness to accept a national standard of illiteracy which would have been unthinkable fifty years ago—have many causes in the turbulence of our present social conditions. Roger Sale's loving survey of traditional children's literature is a little like an archaeological "dig" into the subsoil of a way of life that has little chance of natural survival today, but which may once have supported a level of imaginative fluency that is now beyond our reach. □

Nothing in the Hole

JOE McGINNISS

FOOLS DIE. *By Mario Puzo. G.P. Putnam's Sons. 598 pp. $12.50.*

Well, here it is: the heavyweight champion of the season; the extravagant, long-awaited smasher by the author of *The Godfather*; the holder of the new world's record for a reprint rights sale ($2.2 million, to New American Library, in a package deal which also includes future *Godfather* paperback rights), the book that was number one on the fiction lists before publication; the brawling, lusty lollapalooza that put its author's face on the cover of *Time* magazine—and, oh Lord, what a mess it turns out to be.

What a hodgepodge. What a *lump*. What an unfinished, undisciplined, disorganized mass. What a clarion call for the return of the editor, any editor, to a position of influence in the American publishing process.

It appears as if, at the start, Mario Puzo had an idea for a Las Vegas novel. It appears as if he worked upon it for a time. Chapter II of *Fools Die* is, in fact, a marvelous Las Vegas short story: terse, taut, evocative and controlled; the very opposite of the rest of the book. But then something must have gone wrong. It is hard to tell what. Perhaps the Las Vegas novel showed signs of remaining small and tight. Only five or six characters. Only one locale. Not at all vast and panoramic—and wildly salable—like *The Godfather*.

And here, perhaps, is where Puzo was trapped by his earlier success. By his commercial reputation. By what he thought was expected of him, or, after the big payoff he'd once enjoyed, by what he was expecting—or demanding—of himself. Once, after many years of trying, he'd hit the jackpot. Now he felt compelled to keep pumping quarters into the machine until he made the bells ring again.

So Puzo broke off the Las Vegas book and started fresh. This time with the idea of writing an autobiographical novel about what happens to a writer when his book makes it big and he sells it to the movies, followed by, as Puzo puts it in Chapter I, "a full-blast ending in Hollywood with our hero gobbling up all its rewards, money, fame, beautiful women. And don't go away—don't go away—how it all turns to ashes." It is the sort of thing Erica Jong did very badly in her sequel to *Fear of Flying*, and in *Fools Die*, Puzo manages to do it even worse.

Then, with the Hollywood novel not working either—working, indeed, far less well than did the Las Vegas pages—Puzo broke off again and, apparently to amuse himself, or to work out some tensions and anxieties, and some of the hostility he feels toward literary critics, he pounded out a ham-handed, sophomoric caricature of Norman Mailer; a piece of self-indulgence that had nothing whatever to do with either of the books he had been trying to write.

And then, with the years rolling by, and the memory of *The Godfather* possibly beginning to fade from booksellers' minds, and none of the new work really coming around, Puzo ceased being an author and became instead something which he is truly very good at: a poker player. He took his pages—and from the evidence of the published book it seems a safe assumption that he did take *all* of the pages—shuffled them together like playing cards, put them in a box, brought them to his publisher, and without blinking, said, here it is: my big new best-selling novel. To Puzo's credit as a poker player, the bluff worked. The material was published, apparently without further refinements. Consisting of one very fine short story buried among 500 pages of debris.

The Las Vegas material had potential—a useful editor, meaning an intelligent editor who was permitted to keep both eyes on the manuscript instead of one eye on the cash register at all times, might have persuaded Puzo to mold it into a decent piece of work. Instead, we are given this preposterous, lard-bellied assemblage of first draft posturing and bombast, of barstool philosophy and bluff. And, the bluff having worked, Puzo again rakes in the chips. □

Joe McGinniss, the author of The Selling of the President, *is completing a book on Alaska to be published by New American Library.*

Mandarin and Socialist

MARK SHECHNER

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND POLITICS 1932-1972. *By Philip Rahv. Edited by Arabel J. Porter and Andrew J. Dvosin. Houghton Mifflin Company. 354 pp. $15.*

IMAGES AND IDEAS IN AMERICAN CULTURE: The Function of Criticism. Essays in Memory of Philip Rahv. *Edited by Arthur Edelstein. Brandeis University Press. Distributed by the University Press of New England. 244 pp. $10.*

This is the first of a two-part piece, the second part of which will appear in the next issue.

To think of Philip Rahv is to call to mind a familiar, almost canonical, chapter in the history of the American Left: the honeymoon of American communism in the early years of the depression, the traumatic end of the romance in the wake of the Moscow Trials and the Hitler-Stalin pact, and the recoil from

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radicalism in the 1940s and 1950s when anti-communism made a home for the homeless radicals whom Stalinism had cast adrift. It is a history known, celebrated, and occasionally wielded by its survivors as "the experience of our generation," and when viewed from a sufficient distance it seems indeed to have a sort of generational unity.

Rahv played a pivotal role in this history. Together with William Phillips he founded *Partisan Review* in 1934 under the sponsorship of the New York John Reed Club, a cultural arm of the CPUSA, and three years later stole the magazine away from the party to re-establish it as a voice of an independent, literary Left, which was nominally Trotskyite but given mainly to the ventilating of radical perspectives by bringing avant-garde art into the claustral arena of Marxist politics. *Partisan Review* quickly became a rallying point for anti-Stalinist radicals and a clearing house for new ideas in a time of great political and intellectual confusion. Its rise to prominence in the 1940s, when it was instrumental in weaning the prevailing progressive culture away from what Lionel Trilling called its "liberal imagination" and Dwight Macdonald more truculently labeled "Kulchurbolschewismus" was due largely to Rahv and Phillips's skill in marshaling a restless coalition of radical and avant-garde elements and in knowing, at any particular moment, where to put their emphasis and when to pull their punches.

Such was the success of *Partisan*'s wary blend of principle and maneuverability that a student of its history, Stephen Longstaff, could claim in a recent essay that by the 1940s the members of the *Partisan* "family," so many of whom started out in the 1930s as marginal and footloose intellectuals, "were able to order the debates that preoccupied intellectual America" and "by the end of the decade . . . succeeded in imposing not only their preoccupations but their characteristically ebullient modes of assertion and debate on the rest of the U.S. literary world."

Appraisals of Philip Rahv lead automatically to talk of *Partisan Review* because the meaning of his career is synonymous with the historical role of the magazine. If anything, its achievements overshadow his own, at least insofar as his reputation as a writer has been eclipsed by those luminaries for whom he provided a forum, including Lionel Trilling, Saul Bellow, Meyer Schapiro, George Orwell, Sidney Hook, Leslie Fiedler, Harold Rosenberg and Robert Lowell. To a considerable extent he sacrificed his own future reputation in order to establish theirs; discovering and promoting talent *was* his career. More than any selection of Rahv's essays, *Partisan Review* itself for the thirty-five years of Rahv's editorship is his authentic collected works, and it is not to slight the contributions of William Phillips or the others who labored with Rahv, or sometimes fretfully under him, in the '40s and '50s—Dwight Macdonald, Mary McCarthy, F.W. Dupee, Delmore Schwartz and William Barrett among them—to say that the character of the magazine in its heyday, with its adventurous juxtaposition of mandarin aesthetics and socialist politics, its zest for withering polemics and its invigorating tincture of European thought, bears the stamp of Rahv's personality.

Rahv himself was fairly unproductive as a critic: his collected writing would scarcely total more than a thick volume of occasional essays and book reviews, a scattering of uncollected editorials and manifestoes, and an unfinished book on Dostoevsky which he labored over in desultory fashion for more than thirty years. Yet the editors of this new volume of his essays are quite justified in claiming that he was, in his own right, one of the finest literary critics of his generation. I am certainly not the only reader, weary of contemporary academic prose, with its post-modernist vanities and ponderous simulations of scientific rigor, to come happily back to Rahv in admiration for his economy of means, his passion for social ideas, his dexterity with intricate dialectics, and his sensitivity to the social and cultural ground of individual sensibility.

Though he wrote slowly and took great pains in the articulation of his positions, he was a formidable rhetorician who drove home his points with a pungency and directness that bespoke not only a sure grasp of situations but of the resources of English and the tactics of argument. One thing about Rahv that has been too little understood—perhaps because in conversation his Russian accent could be so overbearing—is his immigrant's love of the English language and his skillful deployment of its rhetorical categories. Yet such expressiveness was no isolated achievement of technique but a quality rooted in the very cast of his mind: in his rationalism and his historicism. Mark Krupnick, a young critic who worked with Rahv on his last editorial venture, *Modern Occasions*, which ran for six issues in 1971-72, has observed, and rightly, I believe, that Rahv's most important contribution to critical thought was "his insistence on the importance of historical consciousness, Nietzsche's 'sixth sense,' at a time when it was unfashionable."

Rahv was fairly drenched in history, though his interest in the past had scarcely any resemblance to the placid historicism we commonly refer to as "literary history," which is essentially an abstracted assemblage of major "texts" silhouetted against the glow of distant events. Nor did he draw Marxist lessons about history as the irresistible press of "objective conditions," though he had been indoctrinated in the Marxist canons of analysis with their stress on objective and ineluctable material forces. He was a Jew, a Russian, and an immigrant (he had come over at the age of 9) for whom history was bred in the bone; it was the medium in which a man *had* to live, just as he had to walk on the earth and breathe the air. And as a modern Jew and expatriate Russian he understood history to be a tragic medium whose keynote was failure and whose anthem was mass destruction.

Yet as a writer and intellectual in search of what Van Wyck Brooks had called a "usable past," Rahv also looked upon history as the zone of opportunity, the element in which a writer could define his being, which is why literary modernism and revolutionary Marxism did not strike him as fatal

Mark Shechner teaches in the Department of English of the State University of New York at Buffalo.

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opposites, for both were radical efforts to grasp the same desperate situation: the crisis of modern European social order. Thus he could honor such writers of reactionary tendency as Eliot and Dostoevsky with the same passion with which, in the early '30s, he had done homage to Lenin and Trotsky. It never dawned on him to regard criticism as a place of refuge above the fray, and even in the postwar decades when the New Criticism ascended in the academy and battle-scarred ex-Communists made their peace with the transcendental ironies of Kierkegaard, the brooding mysteries of universal alienation, and the healing benefits of psychoanalysis or religion, Rahv remained engaged and loyal to his rationalism, even if his ardor had become firmly anti-Communist, like everyone else's. He would say in praise of F.R. Leavis that the latter "was essentially right in remarking some years ago that 'one cannot be seriously interested in literature and remain purely literary in interests.' "

No one among his contemporaries was more adept at distilling from literature the play of forces impinging upon the artist's imagination, and the writers whom he embraced, like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Hawthorne and James, were men whose deep passions and contradictions implied the historical currents in which they were awash. Dialectician that he was, and his dialectical habits of thought went far deeper than the Marxism in which they were sometimes cast, he always looked for the prevailing tensions of the age reflected, and responded to, in literature. For example, his judgment of the Transcendentalists is stated in that distinctive dialectical idiom that accounted for the special timbre and weight of his voice:

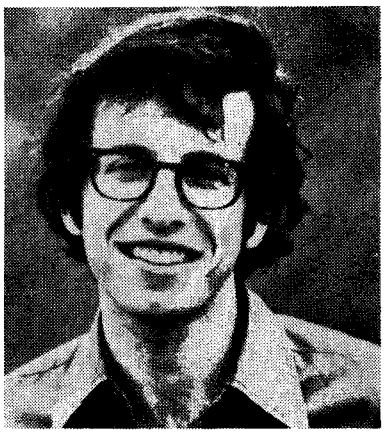
> The Transcendentalist movement is peculiar in that it expresses the native tradition of inexperience in its particulars and the revolutionary urge to experience in its generalities. On a purely theoretical plane, in ways curiously inverted and idealistic, the cult of experience is patently prefigured in Emerson's doctrine of the uniqueness and infinitude, as well as Thoreau's equally steep estimate, of the private man. American culture was then unprepared for anything more drastic than an affirmation of experience in theory alone, and even the theory was modulated in a semiclerical fashion so as not to set it in too open an opposition to the dogmatic faith that, despite the decay of its theology, still prevailed in the ethical sphere.

This is from Rahv's famous essay, "The Cult of Experience in American Writing," written in 1940, by which time Rahv had turned away from Marx and society to something that sounded like Hegel and culture. Even as the central role of class struggle receded in this thought he continued to imagine the historical process, and the creative process as well, as dialectical, and was confirmed in his view of the latter by Freud, whose intricate schemes of internal dialectics reinforced Rahv's native feel for the drama of self-deception and self-discovery that he found everywhere in fiction. In an earlier essay he had praised Dostoevsky in terms that sounded like a veiled self-appraisal: "The fact is that it is not in the construction of harmonies but in the uncovering of antinomies that his genius found its deeper expression." Yet this turn of mind was never anything like a methodology or a strategy of interpretation, but a *donnee* of experience; a man of contradictions, he just happened to see the world after the manner of Hegel.

In "The Cult of Experience," Rahv struck a note that he would strike time and again: that America's social and intellectual life was characterized by a poverty of experience and a thinness of social and political intelligence. The historical combination of Puritanism, which had set stringent limits upon feeling and behavior, and a primitive capitalism of accumulation, which had little use for ideas, let alone an intelligentsia devoted to thinking them, had brought into being a national literature of inexperience which overvalues internal energies, underestimates social realities, often reducing them to symbolized moral landscapes, and ignores entirely social ideas.

Rahv's summary dismissal of the proletarian novel, which was ostensibly geared to the exposure of social conditions, and which Rahv had once striven to promote on that score, was that it hadn't the vaguest conception of the true inner workings of politics and was devoid of political ideas and of characters who could entertain or act upon them. Cut off from knowledge and experience, it fell back upon pure romance.

The problem in Hawthorne, he felt, was that of inexperience, registered in the perplexity with which Hawthorne dealt with, or failed to deal with, the appetites. "He was haunted not only by the guilt of his desires but also by the guilt of his denial of them." Of the romantic symbolists of the 19th century—Poe, Hawthorne and Melville—he charged, "The dilemma that confronted [them] chiefly manifests itself in their frequent failure to integrate the inner and outer elements of their world so that they might stand witness



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for each other by way of the organic linkage of object and symbol, act and meaning." Even Henry James's clear realization that life in America was hostage to narrow conventions was the sign of his disadvantaged relation to European novelists: "While the idea that one should 'live' one's life came to James as a revelation, to the contemporary European writers this idea had long been a thoroughly assimilated and natural assumption."

Upon such a criticism of the American mind Rahv founded the mission of *Partisan Review*: to import the experience and thought of Europe into the American consciousness, thereby enriching it and bringing it up to date. In politics, before 1938, that meant to expose Americans to Marx, Lenin and Trotsky—afterward, to the likes of Orwell, Koestler, Malraux, Berdyaev and Sartre. In literature, modernity always boiled down to Dostoevsky, his chief example of the writer immersed in and alert to all the nuances and byways of the modern crisis. Dostoevsky's characters, like the Russian intelligentsia itself, are possessed by ideas. "To his characters," Rahv pointed out, "ideas are a source of suffering. Such people are unknown in countries like America, where social tension is at a relatively low point and where, in consequence, the mind counts for very little and is usually dismissed as 'theory.' "

Of all modern novelists, Dostoevsky stood in closest relation to the modern experience, which meant for Rahv as often as not the Russian example, modernity *in extremis*. The peculiar timeliness of *The Possessed*, he would argue in 1938, "flows from the fact that the motives, actions and ideas of the revolutionaries in it are so ambiguous, so imbedded in equivocation, as to suggest those astonishing negations of the socialist ideal which have come into existence in Soviet Russia." By that year the Moscow Trials had confirmed Rahv's earlier break with the Communist Party and set him resolutely on the course of anti-Stalinism that would grow into full-blown anti-communism in the 1940s when, like so many other disillusioned radicals of his generation, he reassessed his earlier revolutionism, embraced America, and uttered two cheers for democracy and capitalism. The trials also sent Rahv back to Dostoevsky in search of the historical factors that had galvanized revolutionaries with such ardor and then dealt them such a crushing defeat. □

Gracchus Babeuf

The First Revolutionary Communist

R. B. Rose. This is the first full-length biography in English of a central figure in the history of communism and of the French Revolution. Chiefly remembered as the leader of the so-called "Conspiracy of the Equals" of 1796, Babeuf is regarded by Marxist historians as a direct precursor of modern communism. He was, in fact, the first historical figure of consequence to advocate and attempt the attainment of a communist order by a political revolution carried out by a conscious minority. The author sees the events of 1796 both as the culminating chapter in the career of a dedicated revolutionary and as the product of unique eighteenth-century circumstances and attitudes. He traces Babeuf's life and the evolution of his ideas before and during the Revolution, in the process illuminating the course of events in Babeuf's native Picardy in 1789–92 and in Paris during the critical years 1793–95. The author concludes that Babeuf was a "permanent insurrectionist" rather than a would-be communist dictator, always restlessly seeking effective ways to marshal the force of the people against political tyranny and social injustice. $18.50

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At Home in Exile

JOHN MURRAY CUDDIHY

THE JEW AS PARIAH: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age. *By Hannah Arendt. Edited with an Introduction by Ron H. Feldman. Grove Press. 288 pp. $6.95.*

The late Hannah Arendt, a student of pariahs and outcasts, ended her life as an outcast of her own people, the Jews. Her brand of Zionism, as later her report on the Eichmann trial, resulted in her being subjected, according to editor Ron Feldman's introduction, "to a modern form of excommunication from the Jewish community." Her widely scattered, long neglected "Jewish essays" are now at last collected between two covers. Their neglect is no longer excusable.

The first third of this collection examines Jewish history and culture, stateless Jews ("We Refugees"), the "silence" of Stefan Zweig in the early Nazi period, and Jews as pariahs. The middle essays—"Zionism and the Jewish State"—argue the merits of what has been called "the other Zionism,"

John Murray Cuddihy is the author of The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Straus and the Jewish Struggle With Modernity *(Basic), and* No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste *(Seabury).*

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the Zionism of Jewish intellectuals such as Martin Buber, Judah Magnes and Arendt herself, who declined to forget that the "performative" which was the Balfour Declaration made not one but two promises: one to Jews, the other to indigenous Arabs. For these "bi-national" Zionists, Arendt writes to Gershom Scholem in a letter in *The Jew as Pariah*, "wrong done by my own people naturally grieves me more than wrong done by other peoples." The final essays deal primarily with the bitter controversy unleashed by her Eichmann book, and contains her vigorous ripostes to Ben Halpern, Gershom Scholem and Walter Laqueur.

Feldman rightly gives thematic authority to the brilliant title essay, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition" (1944), in which Arendt studies Heine, Bernard Lazare, Charlie Chaplin and Kafka as variants of the type of the Jewish pariah. These pariahs, and not the parvenus, she argues, are the real Jews. (That Chaplin insisted he was of mixed Irish and Gypsy descent bothers her not at all, for Chaplin epitomized "a character born of the Jewish pariah mentality." Heine's pariah was the Jewish *schlemiel* with his touching innocence, poetry and "other-worldliness." Lazare, friend of Peguy, was the conscious and voluntary pariah in revolt against the Jewish parvenu of the late 19th-century France. Arendt identifies deeply with Lazare in his double alienation from both gentile and Jewish establishments.

Chaplin portrays the pariah as "suspect," enacting "the traditional Jewish fear of the 'cop,' " a David outwitting the Goliath of state and society. Arendt found Kafka's pariah in the ordeal of his character "K," the "man of good will." "K's" [illegible]ortunate efforts to become an ord[illegible]is[illegible]y (that is, an inconspicuous) "me[illegible]ais[illegible]r" of the gentile village serve[illegible]ly to confirm the hopeless marginality of his status as pariah. Men of good will in the dark times of moder[illegible]Europe are forced to become "some[illegible]g exceptional and abnormal—sain[illegible]or madmen."

The Jewish parvenu, in this analysis, is a pariah unaware that he is a pariah. For a time in Western and Central Europe [illegible]arvenu Jews could imagine that t[illegible]at[illegible]st European Jews (*Ostjuden*) we[illegible]A[illegible]ly social pariahs. Hitler's polit[illegible]s[illegible]ti-Semitism destroyed this distinction, Arendt argues. There were no longer any privileged or "exception" Jews. Post-Hitler, the Jew in Western society cannot be a human being "either as a parvenu using his elbows or as a pariah voluntarily spurning its gifts. Both the realism of the one and idealism of the other are today utopian," she wrote in 1944. Politics, she believed, must replace both ideology and aloofness. Arendt issued a call: the Jewish intellectual as *Luftmensch* must come down out of the sky.

If to be a Jew is, by definition, to be outraged by anti-Semitism as a moral scandal, to be a Jewish intellectual is to have been baffled by the phenomenon of anti-Semitism as a cognitive scandal. As with Marx and Freud, and other Diaspora intellectuals, the categories Arendt later constructs in the course of her *general* critique of modern society are extrapolations, hidden transformations of the attempts in these her early essays to fathom anti-Semitism—its nature, history, causes and cure. In persisting in this intellectual vocation, Weber's sociology-of-religion category of "pariah" became indispensable to her analysis. Many Jewish intellectuals and historians consider the concept of pariah as applied to Jews to be both inaccurate and demeaning. Arendt wore it as a badge of honor. □

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After Shaw And Wilde

BEN SONNENBERG

PRICK UP YOUR EARS: The Biography of Joe Orton. *By John Lahr. Alfred A. Knopf. 320 pp. $15.*

JOE ORTON: The Complete Plays. *Introduced by John Lahr. Grove Press. 449 pp. $4.95.*

Imagine a Fassbinder hero: homosexual, mischievous, lower-class, not unlike Fox in *Fox and His Friends*, only shrewder, bitchier, smarter, more priapic and less crass; talented, young, a playwright newly arrived and newly rich, who one night is brutally murdered by his middle-class lover who then kills himself. Now how would you like the story? With attention to the phenomena of sodomy, satire, suicide, social mobility and the stage? Or in page after page of indifferent prose, though with diligent research and plenty of facts, as in *Prick Up Your Ears*, from one wishing shyly to extend his "inquiry into the nature of comedy" via the Oedipus complex?

Joe Orton, the subject of *Prick Up Your Ears*, also the prick (*Ears* is an anagram) by John Lahr, was among several British playwrights to come into prominence in the 1960s. Others were Pinter and Wesker, Arden, Bond and Stoppard. Even in this galley, Orton is of note: a harsh, original talent with great satiric gifts. Three full-length comic works for the stage bear Orton's reputation, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, *Loot* and *What the Butler Saw*. In addition, Orton's *Complete Plays* includes, in stage versions, three short plays for TV and one for radio. The short plays are inferior. The most pretentious, *The Good and Faithful Servant*, is close to the sort of realist tripe Orton could best send up. Two later plays are imaginative, *The Erpingham Camp* and *Funeral Games*, but show a cynical consciousness of Joe Orton striking the Joe Orton note. Only Orton's first play, *The Ruffian on the Stairs*, for radio, is affecting.

Before I tell of the longer plays, mark Orton's reputation: baleful black humorist, realist-satirist, "prepared to speak the unspeakable" (Lahr), prankster, "the first contemporary playwright to transform the clown's rambunctious instincts from the stage to the page" (also Lahr), "master *farceur* of his age" (Lahr again). In fact Orton's work is significant, but not as this suggests. He certainly wasn't a "master *farceur*": that is, of the highest standard, like N.F. Simpson. Neither was he brave, as Lahr implies, by the standards of Jarry, Artaud or Genet. Nor was he "the first contemporary playwright to transform. . ." and so on, unless you don't think of Beckett (or Osborne with *The Entertainer*). Nor as realist-satirist was he above N.F. Simpson or Harold Pinter. Orton actually is significant as a type of commercial triumph, in the old-fashioned Maugham-Bridie-Lonsdale mold, with overlays of the ugly, of nihilism, "heartlessness" and trendy impiety. In general Orton is enough like his great historical models (Coward, Shaw and Wilde) to be of literary interest. But in particulars he is still more like his commercial kindred, the Rolling Stones, The Kinks and The Who. Noteworthy as a genius, Orton is riveting as a hit.

Now as to the longer plays, all deserve frequent revival. *Loot* is far and away the best. It satirizes state violence. It compares with *Man Is Man* by Brecht in social observation, if not in compassion; with *Widowers' Houses* by Shaw in thematic interest, if not in skill. No recent play compares with *Loot* in its satire of violent action as used routinely by the police in a modern democracy. Formally weak, *Loot* yet stands apart from Orton's other plays in confidence, verve, ambition and depth. It is one of the best English plays of its time, with *One Way Pendulum* and *The Homecoming* (purposely taking a very short span), and is the more remarkable as an interesting play in Marxist terms for Orton's apparent immunity to such Left-leaning as was (and is) fashionable in the postwar London theatre. Its action is a little like Shaw's toward the end of *Misalliance*; its gags are like those on the *Goon Shows* (or like this from *The Spike Milligan Show*:

> Suspect: Murder is an ugly word.
> Detective: Yes, but it's not as ugly as *aaaghrpstblrstplkt!*)

But its main character, Truscott, is unique: well, of course surpassed satirically by Sergeant Kite in *The Recruiting Officer*, but an otherwise peerless example of the modern *miles gloriosus* who gorges on men.

Orton's last play, *What the Butler Saw*, is less interesting, except as being unfinished. It was his try at *boulevard*. He would never have filled it out, I suspect, being mercifully deficient in "polite" experience. Neither probably could he have fashioned the kind of gleaming art-as-machine he was aiming for, after Feydeau. I don't think he had it in him to give something so far above its deserts to one of today's London audiences. His ambition is not uninteresting, as (to judge by Alan Ayckbourne) it might have been had he succeeded. Moreover the short scenes play well; the dialogue is excellent, Wilde-derived, *highly* self-assured:

> Mrs. Prentice: What are you doing with that dress?
> Prentice: It's an old one of yours.
> Mrs. Prentice: Have you taken up transvestism? I'd no idea our marriage teetered on the edge of fashion.

Still, on the whole, *What the Butler Saw* pronounces Orton's worst characteristic as a dramatist: facetiousness; even in outline it isn't thorough in its satire on doctoring; and, on the theme of it's-for-your-own-good coercion, Orton did better in *Loot*. Also its situations veer toward the exotic, while its many gags are *too* many and of a low English radio type. Compare: from a radio show of the '60s:

> Young Girl: Why am I strapped to this operating table?
> Mad Doctor: Call it an old man's whim.
> Young Girl: Why am I strapped to this old man's whim?

From *What the Butler Saw:*

> Prentice: ...Undress.
> Geraldine: I've never undressed in front of a man before.
> Prentice: I shall take account of your inexperience in these matters.
> Geraldine: I couldn't allow a man to touch me while I was unclothed.
> Prentice: I shall wear rubber gloves.

Surprisingly, Orton's first stage success, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, holds up well after fourteen years. Its slickness is its strength. (No wonder Rattigan loved it.) Much that seemed gratuitous in 1964, to me anyway, looks important now, particularly *Sloane*'s nourishing of a near-bottomless social greed for ugliness, reflected by rock in the '60s and by the West German theatre today. "I'm an acquired taste," Orton said, "a double entendre if there ever was one." Like Pinter, conspicuously in *The Caretaker*, Orton used *consumer* language as both a medium and a theme. Indeed it is easy to read *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* as satirizing commodity capitalism, where Sloane himself is the product consumed, with its implications for oral sex. More to the point, *Sloane* retains an astonishing power of outrage. This has less to do with satirical targets-of-opportunity such as Orton found regularly in sex roles, marriage and Roman Catholicism, than with *Sloane* sending up a notion of tragedy shaped, especially in

Ben Sonnenberg is the author of Jane Street *and other plays.*

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England, by newspaper reading.

Fundamentally, the Sad Story, with tones of Poetic Justice, this notion is promoted by Lahr in his Introduction. It is further promoted in *Prick Up Your Ears*. Now Orton is a rich subject, not only for having been bludgeoned to death at 34 but for having written exclusively in a supercharged satiric style; for *not* having been an epigone of Pirandello or Brecht; for *Loot*; for his sex life, his smarts, his success. But Lahr is unequal to it. He just about gives the murder. In fact he has written the murder of Orton more than the life. Orton is shown as Doomed Artist, his lover, Kenneth Halliwell as Fatal Man, and together they form the stereotype of the Tragic Marriage.

Lahr throughout is Reliable Narrator: self-effacing, obtuse, almost proud he is dull. "I am not Lord Hamlet meant in all both to validate and enhance a too-sensational tale.

But an attitude good for interviews will not always serve. Some things need an opinion. Take Orton's diaries. Extracts from these are many, the best parts of the book; not enough reason to buy it, still they should be known. As a biographical resource, they are wasted, owing to Lahr's habits of parochial explanation and of excited pointing to the not quite relevant. In themselves they are thrilling, however, both as being sexually explicit and as amplifying certain ideas of well-established importance. At times they read like *My Secret Life*. They evoke *"noirs tableaux"* from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. At the very least they could be discussed with reference, if not to Benjamin's famous essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," then to *The Other Victorians* by Steven Marcus. Instead they are used to gloss the plays, not very well at that, more just to keep things moving. Why? Because Lahr has no opinion. Orton liked going to men's rooms for sex. Lahr (as Reliable Narrator) neither shares Orton's appetite nor can he comprehend it. Its implications are lost on Lahr. He doesn't endorse such behavior and so won't do more than record it. Lacking an opinion, Lahr appears to combine the pusillanimity of the "authorized" biographer with the prurient detachment of a popular writer on sex, all in a kind of forbearing drone.

Why Lahr was encouraged to write Orton's life is puzzling to me. After all, this is *the* biography, with help from the Orton estate. In principle it was a very odd choice. In practice it looks perverse. Not once is Lahr *inward* with Orton. That is what kills his book. Perhaps in accord with a general rule, Good Modern Dramatists get Bad Lives? □

Lives At Risk

JANE MANKIEWICZ

LYING LOW. *By Diane Johnson. Alfred A. Knopf. 278 pp. $8.95.*

Diane Johnson's last novel, *The Shadow Knows*, began on a Wednesday and ended a week later. Her new novel, *Lying Low*, starts on a Wednesday and ends the following Saturday. I mention this not because I think the Wednesday parallel is so interesting but because I find it amazing that Johnson has written a novel just as disturbing but larger and riskier—and sliced off four days.

Lying Low is set in Orris, Calif., in August 1975. Orris is a parched university town in Northern California—"brown and flat, except for the lawns, which are kept green by sprinklers and in the dazzle of the heat appear red." Theo Wait (". . . who has given as much to the world, approximately, as she has gotten; that is, not too much from either side, because of mutual mistrust") is a 60-year-old ex-dancer who lives in the house where she grew up. Her brother Anton, a famous photographer, lives with her between divorces. There are two boarders: Marybeth Howe, from Bet-

Jane Mankiewicz is a writer who lives in New York City.

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tendorf, Iowa, and Ouida Senza, from Brazil. Marybeth is known in Orris (through Wednesday) as Lynn. While she was at college in Ohio, she helped blow up a laboratory that developed napalm. A man was accidentally killed, and Marybeth has been living underground for six years.

Ouida, 30, had been a kindergarten teacher in Brazil. She was brought to America by a Colonel Pacific—as an *au pair* girl. The Colonel wanted her to do a lot more for him than watch the kids, and when she refused, he refused to give back her passport. Ouida lives in constant fear of deportation, among many, many other fears. From the people at the First Presbyterian Church, she has learned what a benefit is and is planning, for Saturday, an enormous Brazilian dinner/festival to raise the money to buy her passport back from Pacific. (She's guaranteed a certain turnout: a professor has promised to bring his entire Portuguese One class.)

There is a lot going on in this house—most of it ominous. For starters, a hen from Theo's chicken coop is killed by a neighbor's dog. Theo, who believes she should have known the dog would dig the hole enabling him to kill the hen, is "nearly choking with tension." Ouida rushes to the scene and, squatting, performs a spell that involves emitting healing rays from her hand into the dead hen. (Ouida's life "fed upon hopes of various sorts.") The hen is mourned, cooked and eaten. (Before she cooks it, Ouida slits the hen's throat, runs feathers through the gurgling blood, and wraps the bloody feathers in paper towels. And Marybeth, having no idea why, secretly retrieves some of the bloody paper towels for herself, then gets ready to go to her job at Photophobia—a camera store.) And Anton has slipped "words of love" written on the back of a photograph under Marybeth's door. He slides them, and she ignores them, regularly. (The one who has a crush on Anton is Ouida. She thinks his silver hair looks just the way the conquistadors' hair would look if they took off their helmets.)

After dinner on Wednesday, Theo, on her way to a board meeting at the Orris Co-op her mother helped found in 1937, pauses at the top of the Co-op staircase. She likes the fact that nobody can see her as she looks down on the bustling shoppers (it's a nice, 1970s marketplace that stocks everything from Granola to Grand Marnier) browsing, talking, shopping and stealing. She sees Marybeth talking to a handsome young man. He is Chuck Sweet. He went to high school with Marybeth and has just shouted out her name. It's the first time in six years she's heard anyone say her real name, and even though it means she will have to quit her job, move out of her room at the Waits', leave Orris, and find a new name—she's happy to see him.

The line between fear and paranoia blurs. Everyone in the book and anyone reading it knows that something terrible is about to happen. Terror, premonition, shadows, real and imagined fears: Johnson's point is that, in the end, it's "the dark objects floating just under the surface" that will sneak up and kill us, or get us killed. And if you expect it, it won't happen—something else will. (And it's not always useful, even if you're being followed, to assume that the termite man is *always* an imposter wearing a termite man's costume.)

Wednesday night: Marybeth screams in her sleep. Theo sits up, "thinking, as she has thought at every nocturnal fright for thirty years, God, it is the Finn in my room." Ouida, panicked, mutters, "*Meu Deus*, it is the goat." Anton goes to see who screamed.

Lying Low is intricately structured and beautifully written. I sometimes felt there was a little too much cabling and foreshadowing, but it is done with such deep intelligence and wide humor that I didn't feel used. Ouida, "stuck between Portuguese and English," is drawn with such compassion that her language problems are sometimes wildly funny and sometimes touching, but never mean. (When she's taking the eye test for her driver's license, she's asked to read the top line of the

NIGHT-CATCH

There's nothing for the hands to claim,

this trawler's back from red sun fishless, wet fins in his eyes.

His wet shines once more like gossamer in early dew, the light dies through it

more slowly than a trawler's bones can hope for, or a far warehouse with empty panes lets happen.

The sun shrinks to a cataract eye, goes black beyond some care he looped at noon,

and returns his arms to spray and the net to lapping tide.

Peter Balakian

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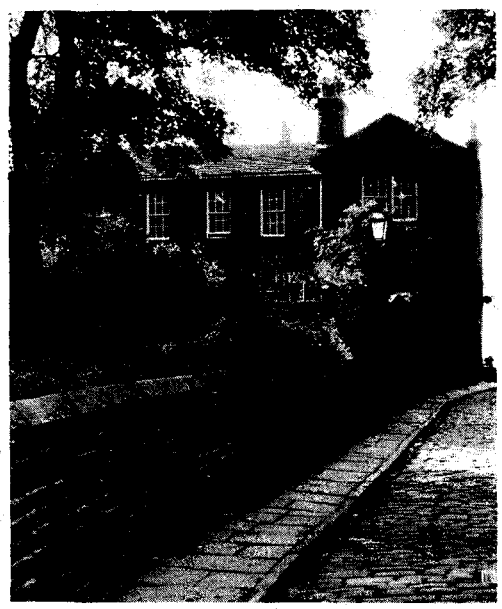

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chart: A, Z, M. She's got it down cold, and reads without hesitating, "Ah, zhay, emmy." The tester frowns and makes notes. Suddenly it becomes clear to Ouida: *soldados*, knowing she has no passport, have ordered the Department of Motor Vehicles to flunk her.)

And Ouida is justifiably confused when Theo tells her that "aspiration" means "hopes, struggles." What *aspirador* means in Portuguese is vacuum cleaner. In fact, vacuums and vacuum cleaners weave in and out of the novel. Sometimes Ouida sees demons inside the machine. Other times she is soothed by it and its ability to drown sound out. Ouida is the only character in the book with any kind of sustaining faith, and she has the least reason for it.

Theo, full of liberal talk, has quite a list of people she would "off" if given the chance, including the Nevada members of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. "And people who oppose a sign ordinance. I would off them." She has Ouida do most of the housecleaning.

Marybeth doesn't delude herself that there are secret crowds of supporters cheering her on. She knows she had sympathizers until it became "inconvenient." She used to think "that when the war was over, the world—and she had meant to include herself—and she would both be happy. But the war was over, and it and she were not happy." She tells herself again and again, "You can't be happy, but you can be good."

I don't think the role Diane Johnson gives Chuck Sweet ("Sweet Chuck," as Marybeth calls him in bed) is worthy of the levels of intelligence and complexity of the rest of the novel. But to say why would be to give away what happens at Ouida's feast; 4-year-old Chen-yu's appearance and disappearance; Julie and Alistair and the jelly jars; Mr. Griggs and the Bank of America; Fontana prison; and a lot more—all rich and harrowing reading.

When Anton says, "I mean to lie low until the food is served," his chances for doing so are about as good as Marybeth's when she falls back on her childhood prayer: "Dear God, please don't let anything happen." □

The Poet's Choice

Out of curiosity and in the hope that titles which would ordinarily escape the attention of a literary editor would turn up, we asked a number of poets to list the volumes of poetry they most admired over the past year or so and to comment upon them if they wished. Their responses follow.

A.R. AMMONS

The best poet I've read lately is John Ashbery, whose book *Houseboat Days* (Viking) wasn't overlooked. The next best was so neglected it didn't find first publication in America. The poet is Jerald Bullis, the book part of his long poem, *Inland*. The publisher is Gervais Jassaud, Collectif Generation, Paris.

ANTHONY HECHT

In response to your request for a list of books of poetry that have especially pleased me and have appeared within "the past year or so," I submit the following unreasoned (though not, I trust, unreasonable) catalogue. The books appear in no special order: *Hush* by David St. John (Houghton Mifflin); *Life Among Others* by Daniel Halpern (Viking); *Comforting the Wilderness* by Robert Shaw (Wesleyan); *Spectral Emanations* by John Hollander (Atheneum); *The Collected Poems* by Howard Nemerov (University of Chicago Press); *Day by Day* by Robert Lowell (Farrar, Straus & Giroux); *Hello, Darkness* by L.E. Sissman (Atlantic/Little, Brown); *The Retrieval System* by Maxine Kumin (Viking/Penguin); *Geography III* by Elizabeth Bishop (Farrar, Straus & Giroux); *The Mind-Reader* by Richard Wilbur (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich); *A Call in the Midst of the Crowd* by Alfred Corn (Viking/Penguin); *Charon's Cosmology* by Charles Simic (George Braziller); *The Late Hour* by Mark Strand (Atheneum) and *Houseboat Days* by John Ashbery (Viking).

Such lists are never comfortably inclusive, and I am troubled by a sense that I've left out some good books. Also, though it would be nice to offer comments on each of the above, it would take too much time and space. So I hope the list all by itself will do.

JOHN ASHBERY

I'd like to begin by calling attention to two books which have received a fair share of critical attention but which in my opinion are still neglected: Elizabeth Bishop's *Geography III* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), because it's a book by Elizabeth Bishop, and *Spectral Emanations* by John Hollander (Athe-

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neum), one of the most brilliant minds producing poetry today. Then two books by well-known poets which have, I believe, been quite neglected: Kenneth Koch's marvelously funny Spenserian epic, *The Duplications* (Random House) and Mark Strand's still austere but no longer reductive, and richly moving *The Late Hour* (Atheneum).

David Shapiro's *Lateness* (Overlook Press), his best book so far, passed virtually unnoticed, as did Alfred Corn's excellent second book, *A Call in the Midst of the Crowd* (Viking/Penguin). Jack Anderson's *Toward the Liberation of the Left Hand* (University of Pittsburgh Press) and Enrique Lihn's *The Dark Room* (New Directions) explore the narrow gap between the realism and the surrealism of everyday life.

I would like to add a bunch of fascinating books from small or smallish presses but if I were to start characterizing them I would get into writing an essay:

The Choice by Rose Drachler (Tree Press); *Tropicalism* by Kenward Elmslie (Z Press); *Rocky Dies Yellow* by Michael Lally (Blue Wind Press); *The Home Book* by James Schuyler (Z Press); *The Road Is Everywhere or Stop This Body* by Rosmarie Waldrop (Open Places); *The Reading of an Ever-Changing Tale* by John Yau (Nobodaddy Press) and *Empty Heart* by Joshua Zim (Phantom Court Press).

MAXINE KUMIN

Some praise is due Ecco Press for reissuing Louise Bogan's *The Blue Estuaries*—a major title which should be considered a classic. Two university presses, Chicago and Indiana, should also be congratulated for publishing, respectively, the collected poems of Howard Nemerov and David Wagoner. Again, kudos to Ecco for Sandra McPherson's *The Year of Our Birth*—a beautiful format and typeface worthy of the poems. Alice James Press in Cambridge, Mass. published a fine first book by Joyce Peseroff called *The Hardness Scale*. I realize that commercial presses are notably absent from my list, but I do admire Gerald Stern's *Lucky Life* from Houghton Mifflin.

HOWARD NEMEROV

Three of my recent favorites are the following: Ben Belitt, *The Double Witness: Poems 1970-76* (Princeton University Press). His difficult intensities require hard reading, but as always before they reward it. Maxine Kumin, *The Retrieval System* (Viking/Penguin). After her 1972 book, *Up Country*, I didn't think she could do even better—didn't think anyone could, for that matter—but she's gone herself one better once again with these austere meditations on grief and loss. Karl Shapiro, *Collected Poems, 1940-78* (Random House). Having the whole record to hand in one volume makes it possible to realize all over again what a distinguished career his has been and is; a great constancy runs through and unites his many and disparate adventures in style.

ROBERT PINSKY

I'll single out a younger poet, and choose Frank Bidart's *The Book of the Body* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), a second book that deserves a lot of attention. (It was published in 1977, and is about to appear in paperback.)

Bidart's work combines a strong sense of drama with philosophical depth. The intellectual seriousness and radically original technique of this book make it stand out among the work of his contemporaries.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

Ever since your first invitation to list books of poetry most admired, I have dithered along wondering why I was hesitating. Then it came to me that I am still feeling allegiance to Robert Lowell's *Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1976): to cite other books a little more recent but much

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less important would be misleading.

So—I bid Robert Lowell, knowing that you may find my choice too far back to qualify for your list. As for optional commentary, I'll type out my one-sentence reason: Lowell's work exemplifies current poetry: discourse based on one's whole life as the research, with the language itself providing drama by means of scrambling hints of subversion and enhancement in its syllables.

DENISE LEVERTOV

David Ray's *Enough of Flying: Poems Inspired by Ghalib's Ghazals* (Redbird Books, Thompson, Conn.) is a book of brief, almost epigrammatic love poems that stands out for me among the books of poems I've read this year. Hilda Morley's *A Blessing Outside Us* (Pourboire Press) presents finely wrought poems by one of America's best, but most neglected poets.

JAMES MERRILL

It is probably superfluous to list the recent books by Bishop, Hollander, Snodgrass, Ashbery and Hecht. In addition I would single out two books by lesser-known poets which I've greatly admired: *A Call in the Midst of the Crowd* by Alfred Corn (Viking/Penguin) and *Keeping Time* by Judith Moffet (LSU Press).

GRACE SCHULMAN

Of the books that have given me pleasure in the past year or so, I think especially of *Selected Poems, 1923-1975* by Robert Penn Warren (Random House), and *Stories That Could Be True: New and Selected Poems* by William Stafford (Harper & Row). The first covers a period of fifty-two years, the second, seventeen. What strikes me is that both writers—each in his own way—continue to change and deepen.

Other books I have enjoyed include *Charon's Cosmology* by Charles Simic (George Braziller), who writes an original poetry of archetypes that lie close to the unconscious, in a bare, austere diction; *Stars Which See, Stars Which Do Not See* by Marvin Bell (Atheneum), for the accuracy of his observations and the music of his lines; *To a Blossoming Pear Tree* by James Wright (Farrar, Straus & Giroux); *The Space My Body Fills* by Etta Blum (Exposition Press); *The Moonlit Upper Deckerina* by Naomi Lazard (Sheep Meadow Press) and *Claiming Kin*, by Ellen Bryant Voigt (Wesleyan). □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

It could be that *Comes a Horseman* is the most handsome, technically most proficient Western ever made. The rolling landscape—part plains, part forested foothills—is as beautiful as Eden, and photographed in dark, sensuous tones as though grass and conifers were fabrics of exquisite workmanship from medieval looms. Against this background the movie exhibits horsemanship and the craft of cattle management at a level of physical excitement that I doubt was ever attained in the films of the great, brief era of horse opera. Gordon Willis is the director of photography and in all that counts it is his picture. For though *Comes a Horseman* gives intense physical pleasure, you must check your brains at the door.

Alan J. Pakula, who directed it, and Dennis Lynton Clark, who wrote the screenplay, have determined to offer a Western appropriate to our times. It is true that this American folk art in its classic form is not only a memory of our childhood but a relic of our innocence. Cowboys and rustlers, bad men and sheriffs and the shoot-out on the wide, empty, sun-baked street are too "pure" for our neurosis-informed understanding of human behavior. But *Comes a Horseman*, attempting to be "relevant," is a mosaic of twisted passions, abnormal violence and love blooming in adversity that is as simple-minded as William S. Hart's celebrated affection for his horse.

Jason Robards, the slow-burning villain, is so obsessed to preserve his cattle empire against the threats of oil prospectors, and so eaten by lust for the daughter of his deceased partner that he no longer remembers to shave. Jane Fonda, defying the cattle king's lechery, and his greed for the few acres and small herd she inherited from her papa, has developed a mouth shaped like a pair of brackets and an aversion to the entire male sex, save only for an aged, tobacco-chewing philosopher of a cowhand (Richard Farnsworth), who is doing as much as his old bones permit to help her save the homestead, and whose death easily qualifies as a noble departure from this vale of tears.

Comes a horseman (James Caan), a smiling, gentle equestrian genius who, one night in a saloon, fells three hired bruisers in the time it takes for the foam to settle on his beer. On his broad shoulder the head of the weary heroine finally sinks to rest as the two of them crouch on the lofty platform of a momentarily disabled windmill. There is also a noisomely humble banker who knows where the mortgages are filed and a petroleum entrepreneur with the plastic features and sleek menace of a security agent on TV prime time. And over this Western served up to our supposed taste the blood of the saved and the damned is spread like ketchup. I wouldn't have believed anyone would attempt to con us with such nonsense if Jack Nicholson had not come to town a few weeks ago with much the same tale to tell in *Goin' South*. However, Nicholson played it for laughs, sort of, while Pakula's film is a spectacle of addled solemnity.

In the brief time of its glory, the Western developed a highly stylized form that was ideal for its ingenuous audience and the technical resources at its command. I doubt that it can be "sophisticated" for a more knowing and jaded public, and I'm sure it can't be done by investing the cliches of the form with a fashionable morbidity.

For a director in the first rank of his profession, Eric Rohmer displays from time to time a curious disinclination to take advantage of the screen's capabilities. *My Night at Maud's* could well have

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been performed on a one-set stage, and *Claire's Knee* and *Chloe in the Afternoon*, though less tightly contained, also give the camera little scope for its talents. Of course, these three most famous of his Six Moral Tales all deal with the contemporary male's scruples in the presence of lively temptation; they are a kind of "closet drama," romances in the head.

But now comes *Perceval*, and I am persuaded that Rohmer is temperamentally disposed to depend as little as possible on the resources of film. This tale of chivalry, drawn quite scrupulously from Chretien de Troyes' 12th-century romance, could readily have been made a spectacle as grandiose as *Intolerance*; at least, it could have been an Arthurian Western. Instead, Rohmer has conceived it as a mystery play, as though shown on wagons in some cathedral square. Six or eight stylized metallic trees serve for woods; towns and castles are diminutive in the manner of an illuminated manuscript, and palpably constructed of flats that could easily be handled by a pair of robust monks; the jousts occur in the circumference of a circus ring; the longest journey does not exceed 100 yards, and the chorus, youths and maidens playing lutes and kindred instruments, hovers just at the edge of the action, singing sweetly and looking like a detail from Botticelli.

It is at first an enchanting conceit, this reduction of the screen to the diorama of an Easter egg, but it wears thin. One toyshop tourney looks much like another; the third and fourth journey through the perilous forest lacks the charm of the first. The whole vision begins to feel more stylish than stylized—as though the Fifth Avenue merchants were opportunistically dedicating their windows to some major event at the Metropolitan Museum's Cloisters. The line between elegance and chic can be elusive.

As for the tale itself, I trotted along at first with considerable glee. Young Perceval (a.k.a. Parsifal), breaking at last from the apron strings of his mother who, having already lost a husband and sons to the lists of chivalry, sought to preserve her youngest from any knowledge of knighthood, reminded me in his first days of freedom of Woody Allen in a tight corner. That is, he combines an appalling lack of general knowledge with a formidable ability to meet the specific occasion. In the early scenes he is funny, endearing, and impressive. But after Perceval's visit to the Fisher King and his first sight of the Grail, the picture becomes increasingly solemn, more and more intent on the spiritual burden of the tale, and I wondered why Rohmer thought it worthwhile to take us once again through this familiar pilgrimage. Quaintness of image was turning cute and Perceval, though growing steadily more exemplary with the passing years, was becoming sadly less interesting.

The story obviously attracts Rohmer—it is not, surprisingly, all that different from The Moral Tales. Perceval, lord knows, resists some spectacular allurements; like Rohmer's modern heroes, if he has a fault, it is priggishness. And the modern heroes themselves have a grail, if only their dedication to the fitness of things. I rather like this ethical bridge across the centuries, but I wish, if it was really his intention to draw that parallel, that Rohmer had made it more explicit, revisiting the legend with modern eyes. His scrupulous animation of the medieval perspective seems an ingenious but static tour de force.

Readers have written to complain that when I gave 1916 as the date for the action of *A Slave of Love* (*The Nation*, September 30), I was anticipating the Russian Revolution by a year and the events of the movie by two or more. I then compounded the error in a passing reference to the film the next week. The blunder does not bear on my comments, but even a film critic should be able to remember the dates of events that shook the world, and I apologize. □

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ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

The Matisse exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (until January 30) is significant in two ways: as a tribute to an artist and as a monument to an institution. "Matisse in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art" is the third in a series of extraordinary shows, drawn solely from the permanent collection and promised bequests. The first was devoted to Picasso (1972), the second to Miro (1973). The decision to collect these artists in depth was made by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. at an early date, and if you compare the museum's holdings with those of European museums, Barr's prescience and scrupulous follow-ups are evident. Almost everybody else's collection is thin or patchy compared to that of his museum.

Barr put on the first Matisse show at the museum in 1931, three years after its foundation, and in 1951 he organized a huge retrospective. Ten years later the Modern showed "The Last Work of Henri Matisse: Large Cut Gouaches," described in the catalogue as "a sequel" to the earlier big show. Under the circumstances it is impossible not to see the present occasion as an assertion of the museum's good taste as well as a gesture of respect to Matisse. Indeed the two functions are linked, the dedication of Barr to both art and institution being proverbial. One notices that various works in the 1951 exhibition, then in other hands, now belong to, or are promised to, the Modern—a sure sign of Barr's acquisitive diligence. At another level his contribution to Matisse studies is enormous: his 600-page *Matisse: His Art and His Public* set a standard for tight coverage and clear presentation on a scale that has not been touched again.

In the early days of the Museum of Modern Art, Barr's exhibition policy included realistic art, partly, perhaps, because America offered little else. In shows like "Paintings by 19 Living Americans" (1929) and "Painting and Sculpture by Living Americans" (1930) Barr showed for example Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Guy Pene Dubois. (Both catalogues are reprinted by the Arno Press under the title *American Art of the 20's and 30's.*) But as his taste evolved it was on the basis of European modernism, favoring higher degrees of abstraction and formality. One sees the point—Picasso is a great deal more interesting than Kuniyoshi—but there was also a loss and the present Matisse exhibition reveals it pointedly. A walk round the show exposes the partiality of Barr's taste. The years from 1907 to 1917 and the last four years of Matisse's life in the 1950s, when he created the large cutouts in pure color, are brilliantly represented. Barr's taste is that of a generation that regarded the subjugation of appearances to aesthetic decision as the sign of modernity. Thus he liked the early and late periods of Matisse best.

In his 1951 exhibition Barr represented the work of the 1920s and 1930s well, because he was working on a retrospective and he respected the course of the artist's career. However, what he acquired and negotiated to acquire for the museum was something else: the youthful rebel and the rejuvenated sage are what he sought. The Nice period, between the wars, was slighted because its level of representation must have reminded him of the American figurative art from which he had turned away. The first period includes, of course, that coloristic exclamation, "The Red Studio" (1911), a painting reproduced by Diane Waldman in the catalogue of the Mark Rothko exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. This is indicative of the fact that early, as late, Matisse is assimilable to abstract painting, whereas the Nice period is not. Barr was a good judge of what accorded to his aesthetic of the world subdued by the will of the artist, but his collection of Matisse between the wars is perfunctory.

The exhibition therefore presents a view of the artist filtered through a taste that favors higher degrees of abstraction to lower. The catalogue by John Elderfield, with additional contributors writing about drawings and prints, accepts (how could it not?) this premise. The show confirms that the Modern is the most intelligent and wealthiest institution of its kind in the world. It also reveals that its ideology places it in history. The intense pleasure at what we see should not blind us to the fact that this is a biased view of the artist.

The meaning of Matisse's art suffers from Barr's view. Matisse is an artist secure within the tradition of Mediterranean humanism. It is a chain that has been traced by Fritz Saxl, one of the founders of the Warburg Institute, devoted to iconographical studies, in these terms. "The story of Titian's 'Bacchanal' does not end with Van Dyck. It was emphasized long ago that the French 18th-century *fete galante* cannot be envisaged without its Venetian predecessors." Later in the same article, published in *A Heritage of Images* (Penguin, 1970), he refers to Manet's "Dejeuner sur l'herbe" and to Cezanne's paintings of bathers in which "the subject of the great festival in the open air plays an important part." Saxl stops there, but it is clear that Matisse inherited knowledgeably and warmly the lyrical theme of bodies at home in the world.

Matisse does this in the early period, which includes "Dance" (1909), and in the late period (for instance, the pastoral frieze of "The Swimming Pool"), but his rich exploration of the humanist figure in the Nice period is missing from this show. The depiction of models, dressed or undressed, as odalisques is not compatible with Barr's sense of modernism. The result is that the collection at the Modern has a hole in the middle. The collection is superb, but by abbreviating Matisse's humanism, his use of the solidly modeled figure in three-dimensional space, it loses the dual sense of corporeal identity and ideal occasion. These are balanced in the Nice period in terms of a greater realism, but without any loss of the resonance of the underlying classicizing theme. □

DANCE

NANCY GOLDNER

Gertrude Stein earned her reputation by distinguished hearsay; she persists more as an event than as a writer. *A Wedding Bouquet*, a ballet by Frederick Ashton which the Joffrey Ballet has just added to its repertory, is set to various texts by Stein. Although it is a real ballet, which is to say that it is full of classic dance, complete with a grand *pas de deux* for bride and groom, it shares the mystique of the Stein phenomenon. It is considered by many an unsung Ashton masterpiece, by others an underground treasure—this despite the fact that it has been maintained in repertory, on and off, since its creation in 1937 and was brought to the Metropolitan Opera House by the Royal Ballet in the early 1970s.

More than anything else, it's the queerness of *A Wedding Bouquet* that hits you. Purportedly about a wedding party, it is really about what happens when a collection of eccentrics, some manifestly so and others guilty by association, gather in the same space. The bride does eventually make an appearance, and with due fanfare

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(dribbles of confetti thrown to the cries of "charming, charming, charming"), but such notions as plot, time and character get mere tips of the hat. *A Wedding Bouquet* is a ballet of atmosphere; it means to show us the taste and rhythms of a conglomeration of people more than the details of their interminglings. It gives us slithers of information, intimations of event. Although many characters do what one must call solos and although there are ensemble numbers, structurally the ballet is oddly slippery. The effect is of people coming and going without ever having really arrived. Some of the characters are attached to one another—indeed, morbid attachment is a major theme of this party—but the effect is of isolated action occurring out of the blue, of connections not so much missed as never having been entertained. The ballet's content is mildly nasty. The groom doesn't care to fondle the bride; the "slightly demented" Julia fondles her hair too much. Josephine gets loaded and is asked to leave the party. The effect, however, is comic, because no one pays attention to another's looniness and other unsavory habits. The program note says that *A Wedding Bouquet* takes place in provincial France. That's a lie. With all respect to Stein's adopted land, it could only be England.

And then there is the Stein text itself—gossamer and gossip declaimed (by Royal Ballet principal dancer Anthony Dowell) as stone fact. There's no doubt that Stein's descriptions of this and that character are sentences; it's just that the pronouns, in which the text abounds, are attached to thin air. Ashton confounds the puzzle by not necessarily aligning his characters with Stein's. The narrator's description of, say, Violet ("She may be delightful or not, as it happens") might be the occasion for a small dance variation for Josephine. Then again, there are times when Ashton becomes absolutely literal in his adherence to the text. Drunkenness is drunkenness. Being "older than a rowboat" is precisely that; you crank your arms and creak with age.

For alternations between data and lacunas, between sense and nonsense, are intended to produce the madcap fantasy to which *A Wedding Bouquet* aspires and also to embody the wavering currents by which life presents itself to us. It is for the latter reason that *A Wedding Bouquet* strikes one as so modern. One watches this forty-one-year-old ballet realizing that it is the most avant-garde dance we shall see in 1978. A ballet that is about eventfulness but contains no event on which you can put your finger is an especially daring genre and currently out of vogue. It's a genre Massine built his reputation on, and to appreciate the skill it takes to make something out of nothing, one need only have seen the Edward Gorey-Peter Anastos *Fete Diverse* in early October. Like *A Wedding Bouquet* or Massine's *Gaite Parisienne*, it assembles a colorful group in one room so as to have nothing happen in extravagant ways. And, oh dear, nothing happens. Things do happen in *A Wedding Bouquet*, but the calculated whisperings by which we see them are a trap. With Stein we get predictable feyness; Ashton's case is more complicated. There are manifest chunks of choreography, but it's all pretty thin stuff, even the funny *pas de deux*. For all the audacity of building a ballet around entrances and exits, of letting momentum build in whiffs and snatches, the tone is markedly tepid.

Part of the problem is the Joffrey cast. As the pivotal Josephine, Jan Hanniford looked more like a stuffed bird than a grandish dame; her drunk scene was a washout. Beatriz Rodriguez's Julia was mangy, not "forlorn" (too much grease in her flowing hair, too much black powder under her eyes, too little suppleness in her back). Gary Chryst, as the bridegroom ("They all speak as if they expected him not to be charming") unfortunately lived up to their expectations, having borrowed too much of the unctuousness of the war profiteer he plays in *The Green Table*. But the truth is, *A Wedding Bouquet*, even when played by the great actors of the Royal Ballet, lets us down. The ingenious way by which Ashton has dancers shuffle around yet still dance yields a tone a trifle too mild. The offhand eventually equals pussyfooting. In the interesting tension between event and nonevent, nonevent is the ultimate winner. The possibility that a libretto chock full of characters and situation might evaporate is intriguing, even thrilling—providing it doesn't happen. To my senses, *A Wedding Bouquet* does go poof. There's not one dance image to hold onto. There is a verbal image, but Ashton does not come to grips with it. Purring below Stein's nonsense prose is an icily satiric *Leitmotif* that goes by two words, "charming" and "nice." That a social event must maintain charming and nice airs, no matter what, is the real comic scandal holding up this party. No such barb informs Ashton's choreography. It bobs along in admirably daffy circles and occasionally gathers for a laugh (in the Royal production, that is; the Joffrey dancers aren't good enough yet), but it has no bite and no wildness. It is too nice and too charming. What is left is Ashton's formidable intent, the curious fact that *A Wedding Bouquet* was made in the first place, that it has survived, and so on until we return to the Stein phenomenon itself. □

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ARCHITECTURE

JANE HOLTZ KAY

"Warehouses for crime," "holding tanks," "cruel and unusual punishment."—such epithets (and legal injunctions) against our jails and prisons explain the strange growth in the steel-cage trade in architecture today. "We are in a construction boom as far as prisons are concerned," criminologist Edith Flynn puts it. The doleful news is that some 800—yes, 800—correctional institutions are being built or on the drawing boards today. And grimmer still, ". . . 80% are in the 200-year-old class"—big, bleak, and "obsolete before they open," the Northeastern University criminologist and her colleagues feel.

Old dungeons have been ruled illegal everywhere and, however one views punishment as practiced in the United States, the issue is not *whether* to build a new jail or prison but *how*. Will it be the old eye-for-an-eye prison architec-

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ture? Will we create hostile environments, as if in retribution for hostile acts? Or will the more humane designs sought by a small group prevail? How to design a decent cage may seem a contradiction in terms; no seer can say whether the handful of innovative correctional institutions coming off the drawing boards will, in fact, correct. But some few already built suggest that software instead of hardware, smaller size and adroit design, can reduce the brutalizing life within our nation's Atticas.

Often, you can scarcely distinguish the gentler mode of prison design from the schools, offices and apartments pictured in the brochures of their designers. (In fact, many look less formidable than the contemporary bunkers shaped for, say, the Federal Reserve and other gray bureaucracies.) Some of these projects boast trees and greenery—a woodsy look and clustering outside; butcher blocks and soft materials within. Other jails, high-rising in cities, are a match for the latest office block.

The three jails and connected courthouses newly built under the Federal Bureau of Prisons for Chicago, San Diego and New York typify the new model, resembling "a college dorm," in the words of architect Harry Weese. His thirty-story, $17 million Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in Chicago even won an American Institute of Architects award. Despite a slitted punch-card exterior, its tile floor, carpets and well-furnished spaces are strikingly noninstitutional. Similarly, Manhattan's MCC places attractive bedrooms around communal space. One finds designs as humane in Pleasanton, Calif., Purdy, Wash. and Boulder, Colo.

Beyond agreeable aesthetics, however, such correctional houses reflect new notions on how we shelter prisoners: uniformly, they reject iron bars, stone walls and barbed wire. They disavow the grim bric-a-brac that shelved James Cagney and his like in concrete tiers. The "new breed" designers dispense with the hardware that goes clank clank in the night for both social and economic reasons. They do so in part because it is enormously expensive to build—$40,000 to $60,000 per unit—and in part because "the noise levels are intolerable," as Judge Morris Lasker concurred in the lawsuit at the Tombs in 1974. Moreover, electronic methods like closed-circuit TV make security possible without barricades; materials like Plexiglas can make the job of enclosure less jarring. Rugs, nubby fabrics, beds with mattresses and wooden doors are no less escape-proof than the ever-present steel of earlier pens, not to mention more civilized. They may reduce the hate and frustration that lead to in-house violence.

"It really makes a difference if you have those tiers and doors that slam shut on you, or you have your own key, your reading lamp, your rug," says criminologist Flynn, citing the "friendly complex" at Kane County, Illinois. "Jail is jail," an inmate in the New York MCC library shrugs. "This is nicer than my apartment, though," he concedes. (That is, of course, an irony architects and social critics can't ignore.)

The new prisons share another social concept: they resolutely scale down the size. No more endless cell blocks, no more long corridors and central washrooms that are the scene of most assaults. The 1,000-to-2,000-man "big house" is out; 200 to 400 is the ideal set by the National Clearinghouse for Correctional Programming and Architecture at the University of Illinois, and even these penitentiaries are broken down in modules. This formula prevails in room size too: the old four-to-eight-inmate cells give way to single rooms with private toilets, desks, doors, windows, beds.

Minnesota, which boasts the country's most advanced penal system (in

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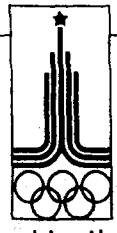

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terms of halfway houses, speed of justice and other vital links), broke ground for one such prison last winter in a crater outside Minneapolis. The new prison will hold a portion of the prisoners now lodged in nearby stack-'em-up Stillwater, the state's medium-security prison. By sloping earth round the barren 160-acre site, architects Gruzen & Partners, New York-based leaders in the field of prison architecture, will remove the need for the old tower, wire and pen arrangement on the perimeter. Each prisoner will have a window on an inner courtyard.

Minnesota's new prison also breaks down the housing into smaller units, an arrangement Commissioner Kenneth Schoen feels works to the advantage of both inmate and staff. "When you're dining with 100 prisoners it's just hard to reach them," explains David Ledo, a guard at Stillwater, where he was once a prisoner. The new architecture is planned to breach human barriers, not simply prettify cages.

The designers of these would-be model jails and prisons must also break down the barriers between inmates and life outside. Since most criminals have lived where most people live, i.e., in urban areas, the planners want facilities in cities, not in rural isolation. An upstate or distant prison increases the estrangement of the inmate from family and friends. Hence Manhattan's new jail forms part of Foley Square, a busy downtown plaza, and the roof of the new Ramsey County detention center in St. Paul, dug into a cliff overlooking the Mississippi, is a city park.

Planning a new prison is like planning a city—a caged city but one of mixed humanity all the same. "You need a design which provides for wide ranges of prison types," says architect Paul Silver of the Gruzen firm. You're talking about felons. . .people in on personal assault, murder. Also the young. Women. Men. You could list as many as thirty categories of people. High income and low, stable and unstable, suicidal and violent, experienced and inexperienced. The question is how do you design an environment that can provide for all these different people?" He doodles a layout on a large sheet of paper before him. "The key is small units that can be broken down and can be overseen by individuals."

For all their appeal, such notions of individualism and humanity did not really begin to register as design until a decade ago. At that time, Congress ordered the Justice Department to change a system rife with failure; and the Justice Department formed the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency (LEAA) and the LEAA, with the National Clearinghouse defined the new standards, encouraged more research, and arranged conferences to disseminate the new approach. Architects entered the act with exhibitions of prize prison design from Iowa, Pennsylvania, New York, Florida and Michigan under the sponsorship of the American Correctional Association and the AIA (American Institute of Architects). The new houses of correction show their labor.

Brick-and-mortar answers, however attractive, don't—nor should they—soothe critics. Liberal criminologists would build parks, provide jobs for inmates and the impoverished ahead of architects, and empty half the prisons altogether for other kinds of treatment. "We confine more people in relation to the crimes they commit and we confine them longer than any industrialized nation in the world," said William Nagle, repeating the truism of the field. Nagle, the author of *The Red Barn*, and Milton Rector, president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and others, plead for a moratorium on prison building. In

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LAKE HOPE

Like the registration plates on their Golden
Retriever's collar, that slide along the silver links
when she climbs out and shivers dry after a swim,
the lovers by the informal pond
are measured by the kind of music they make.

To be dangling in the wet hair at her throat,
legible like the inscriptions on copper
that name the who and where, and what number
to call, they've come by car
to this clouded green mirror the dog's just broken
with a splash that sends the semi-circles
rippling away; that they might move the fish to respond.

From a pile of rocks, leaving so little to be desired,
they throw the stick out a few feet further each time,
finally tossing it almost halfway across the lake,
but never so far that their dog, who is yellow
and knows better, would not go after it.

Scott Ruescher

light of the rate of recidivism, they worry about our jailing ever greater numbers.

They remind you that half of any day's million U.S. inmates are presumed innocent, but awaiting trial because of our sluggish judiciary, and that 60% of those imprisoned are jailed for nonassaultive crimes and could be released without endangering public safety.

Unfortunately, zealots on the law-and-order side are equally adamant about jailing more criminals—and not in "country club" prisons either. ("The natives call it the Eagle River Hilton," said Fred Powers, of St. Louis architects HOK, describing the public response to the firm's benign-looking Anchorage, Alaska, facility.)

"People have very visceral feelings about crime," Nagle said. "One of the reasons our prison system has remained the horrid thing it is, is because we have ambivalent impulses—impulses to heal, and impulses to punish. You see more of the punishing than the healing."

Even when the impulse is healing, however, good prison architecture is "not that easy," in the words of Roy Latka of the San Francisco firm of Kaplan/McLaughlin. "The federal guidelines exist, the minimum size for cells, the exterior windows," his voice trails off. "But planning demands knowing how the building relates to the inmate and who the client is."

To find out who that client is, his firm held open sessions with everyone from ex-inmates to academics, prisoners to guards and wardens, when planning for Santa Cruz. "We found out that one of the things that was important was that you respect movement," Latka goes on. "Yes, we have the single cells that everyone else has. Yes, we have the day rooms that everyone else has. But we consulted with guards so prisoners could move on a less rigid sc[illegible]le. We laid it out so the guards ca[illegible] the prisoners all the time and not fe[illegible]hreatened, so the prisoners can have visiting unescorted, and so on."

Still, it is "not that easy." However striking the "sculpture," however humane the interiors, tests await the shiny new structures—tests as to whether attempts at decency in design can matter to society's castoffs.

Nor obviously, does "everyone" share the benevolence of these architects and administrators. The rough megaliths on state and county planning committees attest to that. "An aphorism in the corrections field is that every prison construct[illegible]ould be accompanied by a den[illegible]on plan," a *Chicago Tribune* ed[illegible]rial recently observed in an assessment of its state's plans to build two glum piles that seem headed for just that fate.

Perhaps this brave new world of prison design will also fail, destined to be recycled into the schools and dentist offices their models so resemble. Yet early readings of their assessments are favorable: life within is less violent and more relaxed; hostile acts have diminished. And what is the alternative? For if there is no proof of the efficacy of the new designs, there is ample evidence of the horrors in the eye-for-an-eye architecture of the old. It is no more than common sense to agree with criminologist C. Ray Jeffery that "Brutality brutalizes; it does not deter or educate." □

Indigenous Music

NAT HENTOFF

In the mid-1950s Count Basie had a band that played like a windstorm. When they were on stand, going downstairs into New York's Birdland was really like delivering yourself to a force of nature, the driving sounds were that palpable. The vocalist at the time was Joe Williams, who had taken his basic training with Coleman Hawkins and Lionel Hampton. Standing there, tall, limber, as self-assured as the sly Count himself, Joe would cannonade the blues against the walls, against the band, against the customers. And he never seemed to make any particular effort to prevent his sound from being swallowed by the band. It just loomed out, clear and penetrating as the brass section.

Some of the critics at the time dismissed Joe as just a slick belter, but they had never heard him away from Basie. Joe had worked all kinds of gigs before then, and so he has since. He is probably the most resourceful and diversified male jazz singer in his itinerant business. Ballads, originals, selections from the Ellington canon, pop tunes—and always, the flavor of the blues; sometimes the cry of the blues itself.

Joe has become prosperous, working much in Las Vegas, as well as in Europe; but in many years there has been only one album that accurately details the scope of his swift, hip wit and vitality—*Joe Williams Live* (Fantasy). Currently, Joe is not under contract to any record label. Although he fills all sorts of rooms around the country, the apprentice hipsters in their gold chains who run the big labels are convinced that Joe doesn't sell records. They are in a position to insure that their prophecy will be fulfilled.

Recently in New York I watched this resplendent survivor work the toughest of all audiences for a black singer whose roots in jazz go back forty-one years to when he turned pro in Chicago with Jimmy Noone. It was an assembly from a Gray Line tour, deposited in the

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Playboy Club for one set only to gaze at the bunnies and generally absorb the low-lit ambiance of dissipation and degeneration. These wary tourists from the fastnesses of New England consisted of white-haired women in their 60s, along with their self-conscious husbands.

Joe Williams, in black velvet jacket, dark gray slacks, and tieless white shirt, appeared before them like a veritable dark stranger. At least 59, he looks fifteen years younger, and stands as invincible as he did when with Basie. Beginning with a floating *The Very Thought of You*, Joe moved into a swinger, improvising with supple sensuousness like a tenor saxophone, and then stopped for some badinage. With easy grace, he made the tour members, including the bus driver, feel in tune, though others may have had some doubts. ("Now you know how he got to be a survivor," said a musician at a table near the stand).

"Well," said Joe Williams, "now we know something about one another, like that I'm colored, I'm going to sing the blues. Now brace yourself. Especially you girls over 35. You never know what I'm about to say." Joe grinned. "They didn't mean for you to know. They didn't even mean for poor whites to know." And, smiling, he moved all of himself into a series of blues choruses that celebrated, with tenderness and urgency, the expectation of the act of love. ("Bring your nice, sweet, moist body on home.")

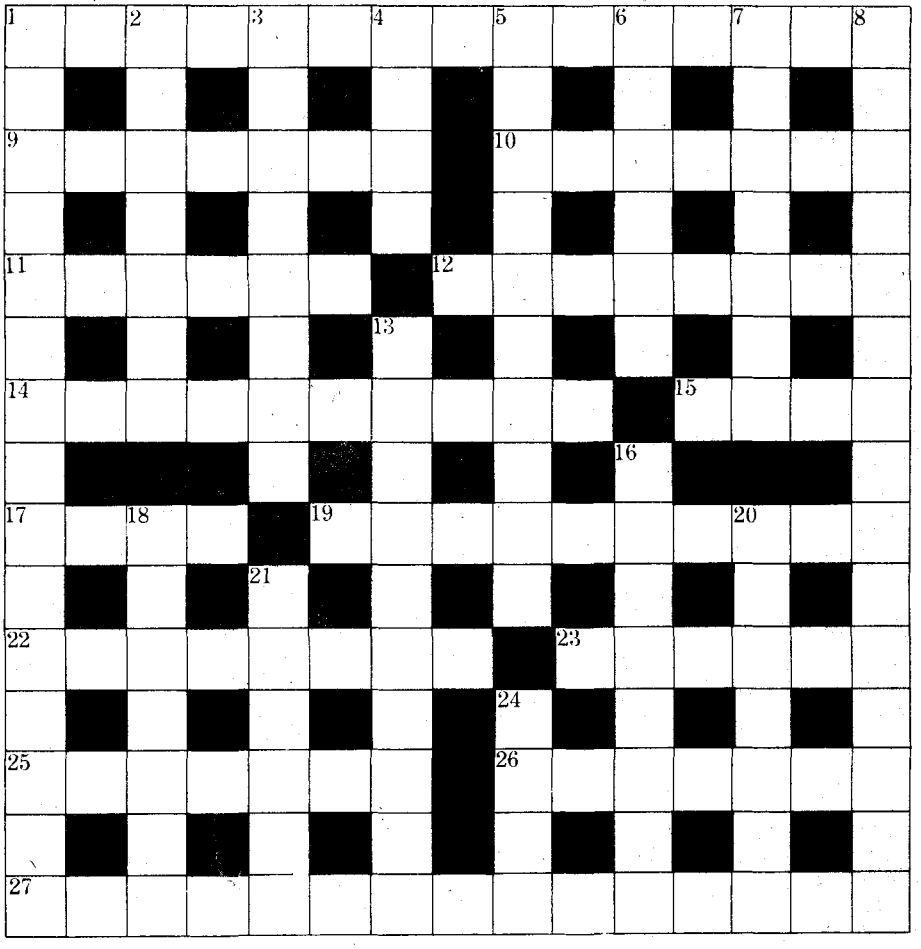
The folks from the Gray Line tour did not move or talk all the way through the blues. And Joe, at the end, looked straight at them, pointed a finger, and said, "I *got* you!" There were no rebuttals. For the rest of the set, with his strong, supple voice—from which he kept on drawing subtly unexpected shadings—Joe Williams deepened the trance with Billy Strayhorn's *Lush Life* and *Autumn in New York*. Then he broke it to lift them, as if bodily, into the exaltation of a shouting blues, *O.K., All Right, You Win*, that he used to sing with Count Basie.

It was time to leave, and with touches of both bewilderment and regret, the travelers from another land filed out—after having applauded Joe Williams with gusto appropriate to their years and station. Backstage, Williams was saying, "I can get them in a black club, I can get them here. I got them in India and Turkey and Afghanistan when I was there this winter for the State Department. I don't think there's any place where I can't get them."

Except on a major record label. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1748

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 A planned escape, no doubt—on regular lines. (9,6)
9 There's a conclusion about the lawsuit that makes it seem all wrapped up. (7)
10 Perhaps is a lame excuse for discomfort. (7)
11 See 4 down
12 One might follow a record sort of pile. (8)
14 How one comes to be a winner, and different from anything known? (*This Side of Paradise*, by Fitzgerald.) (5,5)
15 Relating to some poetry—a modicum without what one keeps in silence. (4)
17 One of such might be lower in Grey's poetry. (4)
19 What one plays on the piano (soft stuff!) makes a well-proportioned model. (6,4)
22 Fell as a duty—an act accomplished around Volume Five. (8)
23 A rhyming game wherein a car is wrecked by an unruly mob. (6)
25 The superior position of a little state agent, in a way. (7)
26 The skeletal part of the register numbers? (7)
27 Sounds like the most important thing to be answered may be inadmissible. (Such as "Who's going on ahead?") (7,8)

DOWN

1 Talk about a satanic character! (Someone has just appeared to make it appropri- ate.) (5,2,3,5)
2 Would one be considered a speech impediment? (7)
3 After the main course they might be emphasized the wrong way. (8)
4 and 11 across Without the hyphen, a murderess, perhaps—of a so-called drugstore cowboy. (4-6)
5 Ma would make this bird a regular young lady in Paris! (10)
6 Whitman's bloomers. (6)
7 The grating could have pep in it, if tightly held. (7)
8 This major work didn't necessarily mean a come-down for the male sex. (3,7,2,3)
13 But it doesn't imply part of the breakfast was stolen! (7,3)
16 Power-grabbers, perhaps. (8)
18 Dante's tomb is here, lustrous black with an unusual finish. (7)
20 Ottoman Turkish malison, of a sort. (7)
21 Walk a little, and you'll see what might hurt the soil. (6)
24 The voice was Jacob's, but the hands were his. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1747

ACROSS: 1 Close shave; 6 and 18 Goes for a spin; 10 Octopus; 11 Stature; 12 Spring in the air; 14 Depleted; 15 Exeter; 16 Unlace; 22 Aurora borealis; 24 Cleaner; 25 Astoria; 26 Base; 27 Pretty good. DOWN: 1 Crossed out; 2 Outcrop; 3 Expense account; 4 Hostile; 5 Visits; 7 Oculist; 8 Slew; 9 Bayeux tapestry; 13 Grandstand; 17 Laurels; 19 Odorant; 20 Palermo; 21 Fairer; 23 Scab.

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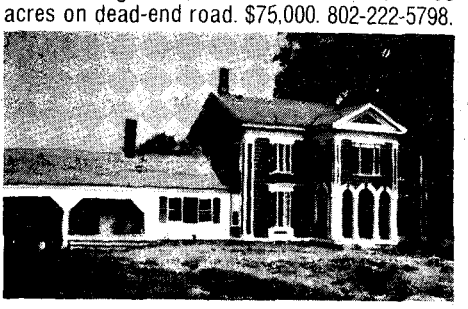

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